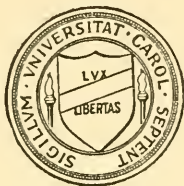


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**THE LIFE OF
ANDREW JACKSON**



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ANDREW JACKSON IN 1845. AGE 78

From a portrait by G. P. A. Healy, commissioned by Louis Philippe to paint it with the portraits of other Americans for the palace at Versailles. It was executed a few weeks before Jackson died and was considered a good likeness

THE LIFE OF ANDREW JACKSON

By
JOHN SPENCER BASSETT, Ph. D.

Professor of History in Smith College

VOLUME TWO

Illustrated



"If you would preserve your reputation, or that of the state over which you preside, you must take a straightforward determined course; regardless of the applause or censure of the populace, and of the forebodings of that dastardly and designing crew who, at a time like this, may be expected to clamor continually in your ears."—Jackson to Governor Blount, 1813.

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VOLUME II

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CHAPTER XIX

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

ADAMS'S administration is interesting because in it were organized two new political parties and because it saw the progress of the long and unhappy war on Adams and Clay. The political situation was rather chaotic, and methods of opposition were uncouth and violent; but it was the seed-time of democracy, and it opened a new phase of American history.

National politics in 1824 were personal. After 1815, the republican party began to ignore the principles on which Jefferson founded it and to follow expediency. It established a national bank five years after it declared such an institution unconstitutional, it adopted Hamilton's theory of a protective tariff, and it favored roads and canals at national expense and passed two bills to that effect, which were vetoed by Madison and Monroe, two statesmen who still clung to the politics of Jefferson. Men who believed in, and others who opposed, these divergent policies were all accepted as republicans. A party which embraces such dissimilar groups can hardly have any other principle than the desire for success.

Another peculiarity of the situation was that neither of the five leading candidates for the presidency, all recognized republicans, stood distinctly for any one policy. It is true that Crawford, special heir of Virginia influence, was considered a champion of state rights, but there were so many republicans of avowed national tendency that he dared not speak loudly for his doctrines. In the same way was the freedom of the others limited,

of Calhoun, who stood for internal improvements, of Clay, who advocated the tariff, and of Adams, who leaned to strong government generally. Jackson alone was not associated in the public mind with any particular policy — neither his length of service nor his political aptitude gave him the opportunity — but, his supporters, who favored him on personal grounds, were of such varied views that he dared not speak emphatically on any important subject. Personality was the principal basis of the canvass, and in such a canvass, it was natural that there should be much overpraising and much abuse.

The new parties were personal. They were a Jackson party and an anti-Jackson party. After a time, Jackson's bold measures, which he justified by principles, aroused protests from persons who believed in opposite principles. Thus personality was merged with theory, and parties again became groups of persons who desired the same measures.

The anti-Jackson men were composed chiefly of the supporters of Adams and Clay. While the first of the two was not popular in New England, he was trusted as a representative of Eastern interests, and Jackson, the frontiersman, was distrusted as a representative of ideas foreign to the older states. Clay's logical support was in the West, but he had just taken a dangerous liberty with it. No one could doubt that this section would prefer Jackson to Adams in a clear contest between the two men. Yet Clay defied the sentiment, in some respects in the face of positive expressions of it, and by entering the cabinet made plausible the charges that he acted for his own gain and that he cared not for the will of the people. These charges, it is true, counted for little with men who admired Adams and his secretary of state; but they were accepted by the great mass of people, very numerous in the West, who thought originally that Jackson would make a better President than Adams. How little he added to the combination with which he threw in his fortunes is

shown by the fact that in the election of 1828 Adams received not one Western electoral vote.

The Jackson party, when fully developed, embraced its own followers and most of those of Calhoun, Crawford, and Clinton, the last not very numerous, but important in New York. Early in 1825, the Crawford forces had not joined it, although in certain matters — as in the opposition to Clay's nomination — some of them acted with it.

"The Jackson men being in the field," wrote Van Buren from Washington, on December 25th, "are of course looking out for the weak points in the enemies' lines and are ready for the assault where opportunity offers. We of the Crawford school lay upon our oars and will not lightly commit ourselves except in defense of old principles."¹ The shrewd New Yorker was only hesitating through a sense of dignity. He could have no objection to an alliance with a promising Jackson faction. A year earlier, August 26, 1824, he was proposing a union between Clay and Crawford, the former to be vice-president. This, he then said, would lay the foundation of a grand republican party with which he would be happy to coöperate permanently, and it would be easy to see that the condition of Crawford's health would give the vice-presidency under him a peculiar value.² The scheme failed and the grand republican party was left to be formed by other means. In the spring of 1826, Crawford was entirely eliminated from national politics and Van Buren was acting with the Jackson leaders in the plans which were laid against Adams. He admits he had then determined to cast his lot with a man from Tennessee.³ He carried most of his faction with him, but it was a bitter pill for the Virginians, long the political arbiters of the country, to follow the leadership of the Western statesmen. From 1789, until the triumph of Jackson,

¹Van Buren to Butler, December 25, 1825. Van Buren Mss.

²Van Buren to Benjamin Ruggles, August 26, 1824, Van Buren Mss.

³Van Buren, *Autobiography*, I., 90, Van Buren Mss.

with the exception of two years under Madison, there was always a Virginian in the cabinet: from that triumph until the administration of Tyler, there was not another in that body.

In 1825 the Jackson and Calhoun wings of the party were quite distinct. With the latter were most of the experienced politicians of the party. Calhoun, college bred, socially prominent, and long experienced in high office, was looked upon by many as the redeeming force in the crude group. He was supported by the capable Pennsylvania leaders in the party and the Jackson men themselves realized his strong position within the organization. But they did not relish the confidence with which some of his lieutenants viewed his prospects. It was through his efforts that General Duff Green was made editor of the party organ, *The Daily Telegraph*, published at Washington. Green was more careful of the interests of his patron than of the party, and as time passed his policy irritated the leaders of the other wing. In that group, the Tennessee senators, White and Eaton, were most prominent. They were not able to cope with the men of the Calhoun wing, either through intellect or political capacity. It seemed to them unequal that the particular followers of Jackson, whose popularity was the basis of the party's hopes, should be overtopped by the Calhounites, who for their ambition were grafted on the organization. All this they felt, but in the presence of party perils they considered it wise to subordinate their feelings. Outwardly, therefore, all was serene, but when success should remove the pressure of a common danger, serious dissensions were likely to appear.

Crawford hated Calhoun cordially and charged him, for nationalistic views, with treason to republicanism. Van Buren inherited this dislike, and that was enough to induce him to side with the Tennessee faction in the new party. But his interests also drew him in the same direction. There had been an heir presumptive since 1800, Madison to Jefferson, Monroe to Mad-

ison, and Crawford to Monroe; it had become a normal phase of American politics, a position to be fought for; and the sagacious Van Buren saw an opportunity to win it through the support of Jackson and those members of his party who were most closely associated with him. Nor was his accession unwelcome to the Tennessee faction. They found him a valuable ally in resisting the threatened predominance of Calhoun, and his social position was a blessing to a party which was sensitive under the criticisms of the rather supercilious society of the capital. In these unannounced dissensions was the foundation of a bitter future conflict.

The position of Jackson in the coming campaign was a quiet one. Returning from Washington in March, he was received with ovations by his supporters in Pennsylvania and along the Ohio. He spoke freely about recent events and openly charged Clay with purchasing a cabinet position by making a President. In Nashville, he was given a great dinner at which many toasts were made in his praise. He then retired to the "Hermitage" and passed the days in dignified ease, as became one who believed in the theory, then generally esteemed, that a good patriot should never seek and never decline office. The managers in Washington charged themselves with the burden of consolidating the various interests which could be brought to his support. He was made to see that he could not aid them by remaining in the public view, and the faithful Lewis was placed at his side to act at once as a restraining force on his impulsive temper, and as a convenient intermediary between him and the Washington manipulators.

But Jackson was not a tool of his subordinates. They knew how strong was his will and were most cautious in trying to influence it. Ordinarily he was a cool and shrewd politician, and his course was not as much shaped by impulse as we are apt to think from the occasional outbursts, which the picturesque school

of historians have often described. He was a man of the people, sharing their opinions of government, their suspicions and their credulity; and on most questions he knew how the people would feel. His absolute courage made him willing to appeal to the voters over the heads of the politicians on some of the most important matters of his time. He left much to his managers, but he usually understood their plans, and never interfered capriciously. In the most serious affairs, he took charge of the situation with the confidence of an autocrat, and in every case with success. Such a man could not be a mere figure-head, however much of the ordinary direction of affairs he may have surrendered to others.

When he was defeated in 1825, it was generally understood that Jackson would be a candidate in the next campaign. It was no surprise, therefore, when in the following October the Tennessee legislature again recommended him to the people as a candidate for the presidency. A few days later, he appeared before that body to resign his seat in the senate. Inclination, he said, prompted him to retire to private life and the recent action of the assembly seemed to make such a step proper. To this simple announcement he added a political appeal. He endorsed a constitutional amendment then being discussed before the public to limit the President to one term of four or six years, and he suggested another amendment by which a member of congress should not be appointed to an administrative office during the term for which he was elected and for three years thereafter. The language in which he supported the suggestion is strong and apparently sincere. In view of his later appointments, it is worth quoting:

The effect of such a constitutional provision is obvious. By it Congress, in a considerable degree, would be free from that connection with the executive department which, at present, gives strong ground of apprehension and jealousy on the part of

the people. Members, instead of being liable to be withdrawn from legislating on the great interests of the nation, through prospects of the executive patronage, would be more liberally confided in by their constituents; while their vigilance would be less interrupted by party feelings and party excitements. Calculations, from intrigue or management, would fail; nor would their deliberations or their investigations of subjects consume so much time. The morals of the country would be improved, and virtue, uniting with the labors of the Representatives, and with the official ministers of the law, would tend to perpetuate the honor and glory of the government. But if this change in the constitution should not be obtained, and important appointments continue to devolve on the Representatives in Congress, it requires no depth of thought to be convinced, that corruption will become the order of the day, and that under the garb of conscientious sacrifices to establish precedents for the public good, evils of serious importance to freedom and prosperity of the republic may arise.¹

Here was evidently an allusion to Adams's appointment of Clay to a cabinet position; but in Jackson's first cabinet five of the six members were taken from congress.

When congress met in December, it was known that Adams would be opposed at every possible point. The Jackson-Calhoun men were alert and not very scrupulous. They had their first opportunity in the President's annual message, which was, indeed, an unfortunate utterance. Jefferson advocated the smallest sphere of governmental activity compatible with the public welfare. Adams desired a generous policy of governmental supervision, the spirit of which was certainly non-Jeffersonian. Just at this time public men were disputing over the power of congress to construct roads, canals, light-houses, and harbors; but here was an academic argument for a general system of public improvements. "The great object," the message said, "of the institution of civil government is the improve-

¹Niles, *Register*, XXIX, 157.

ment of the condition of those who are parties to the social compact." This could be partly obtained through roads and canals, "but moral, political, and intellectual improvement are duties assigned by the Author of our Existence to social, no less than to individual man." To be more specific, the government should maintain a national university, geographical and astronomical observatories, and explorations of coasts, rivers, and interior plains. In his enthusiasm he declared: "It is with no feeling of pride as an American that the remark may be made that on the comparatively small terrestrial surface of Europe, there are existing upward of one hundred and thirty of these light-houses of the skies, while throughout the whole American hemisphere there is not one." The closing sentence was most unwise: "While foreign nations, less blessed with that freedom which is power than ourselves, are advancing with gigantic strides in the career of public improvement, are we to slumber in indolence or fold up our arms and proclaim to the world that we are palsied by the will of our constituents? Would it not be to cast away the bounties of Providence and doom ourselves to perpetual inferiority?"¹

This message must have emanated solely from the author's faculty of theorizing, since it is impossible to see how he could have justified it on any ground of policy then plausible. Those who favored internal improvements were committed to Calhoun, and in the Jackson combination, the Crawford faction, which still held out, was sure to take fright at doctrines so like the old federalist arguments of 1800, and the repudiation of strict accountability to constituents was entirely opposite to the trend of the times. All these points were quickly seized by the opposition, and the country rang with jeers and denunciation. The expression, "light-houses in the skies," was particularly unfortunate: it was too much like "castles in the air." As might

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 311-317.

have been expected, Virginia, the home of old republicanism, was particularly offended. Ritchie, editor of the *Richmond Enquirer*, long the exponent of that school, opened fiercely on the administration, publishing its indignation in a series of articles by W. B. Giles, a bold defender of radical state rights theories.¹ In congress another Virginian, no less a personage than John Randolph of Roanoke, opened the vials of his wrath, denouncing the union of Adams and Clay in the well-known words, "the coalition of Blifil and Black George — the combination, unheard of till then, of the Puritan and Blackleg." Thus the Crawfordites were led to coöperate with the Jackson-Calhoun combination; and this threatened a general Southern and Western movement against the occupant of the President's mansion.

Along with this statement of Adams's loose construction view came notice of the proposed Panama Congress. This was a meeting of delegates from South and Central American states at the Isthmus, to which the United States in the preceding spring was invited to send delegates. Clay favored the scheme from the first; but the President, more cautious in diplomacy, deferred action until he was informed more definitely of the subjects to be considered. It was not until November that they were submitted by the South Americans. There was not entire unanimity in the propositions of the various states, but it was evident that the republics of the South desired to have a league with our government, by which the attempt of any European power to interfere in American affairs should be resisted. The league was to have a biennial congress, to be governed by a majority of its members in time of war, and have authority to apportion the contribution of each state in troops and money. Adams justly realized that we should suffer in such a partnership, and, while he appointed commissioners, he instructed them to assent to nothing, till it was submitted to our congress.

¹Adams, *Memoirs*, VII., 104.

The cause of South America was ever popular in the United States. Clay's championship of it in Monroe's administration was one of his most popular actions. The Monroe Doctrine, with which Adams was largely concerned, was received with satisfaction by the people. This last step in the same direction, for which it was thought Clay was chiefly responsible, created alarm among his opponents. They feared that it would be popular because it stood for liberty and because it was aimed at the Holy Alliance, which American opinion held in special horror. They also saw in it, says Van Buren, something that would draw attention from the bargain and corruption cry, and by uniting Clay and Adams in a popular undertaking serve to justify their association in the government.¹ They resolved to attack the mission as vigorously as possible. In doing so it served their purpose to describe the project, not as Adams had limited it in his instructions to the commissioners, but as it was designed by the South Americans, as a plan to found a permanent league. The construction was unfair, but it was not designed for a very discriminating audience. For some time the managers debated whether the mission should be opposed in the senate, on the confirmation of the commissioners whom Adams had nominated, or in the house on the necessary vote of money for expenses. It was finally decided to make the fight in the senate, since there the Jackson forces had their best speakers.² The discussion was prolonged as much as possible to enable public opinion to form itself; but in the end the senate sustained the President by a vote of twenty-four to nineteen. The fight was renewed in the house on the appropriation of money, but it was there lost by a majority of one hundred and thirty-four to sixty. The most important result for the young Jackson party was that it gave an opportunity to perfect its new organi-

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, I. 93.

²*Ibid.*, 94.

zation; and it was significant that in the senate Van Buren took prominent part against confirmation.

The opposition also brought slavery into the discussion, with eyes shrewdly cast toward the effect on the South. It was then feared that France or England might get possession of Cuba and Porto Rico, and the proposed congress would likely desire to fit out an expedition to make them free of Spain. This would involve the liberation of the slaves there, as in the other revolutionized Spanish colonies. The congress would also discuss the suppression of the slave-trade, and the recognition of the independence of Hayti, both measures distasteful to the South. Should the government lend its influence to a movement which had it in so great a menace for the South? It was ever easy to arouse Southern voters on this question, and Hayne's fiery rhetoric was sagaciously expended in a speech, a characteristic part of which was as follows:

With nothing connected with slavery can we consent to treat with other nations, and, least of all, ought we to touch the question of the independence of Hayti in conjunction with revolutionary governments, whose own history affords an example scarcely less fatal to our repose. These governments have proclaimed the principles of liberty and equality; and have marched to victory under the banner of universal emancipation. You find men of color at the head of their armies, in their legislative halls, and in their executive departments. . . . Our policy, with regard to Hayti, is plain. Other states will do as they please—but let us take the high ground that these questions belong to a class which the peace and safety of a large portion of our union forbids us even to discuss. Let our government direct all our ministers in South America and Mexico to protest against the independence of Hayti. But let us not go into council on the slave-trade and Hayti.¹

On this phase of the opposition, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee stood side by side with all the rest of the South.

¹*Congressional Debates, 1825-6, Vol.II., Part I, 166.*

This debate drew Calhoun, presiding over the senate, into its vortex. When the abuse of the President began, he was asked to rule out of order such attacks on a high officer of the government. He declined to do so on the ground that the senate had no rule on the subject and that he, as servant of that house, had not the authority to make one. He was probably technically correct, but it was believed that partisanship and an unwillingness to offend the Jackson party by seeming to repudiate them, helped him to realize the nature of the technicality. The incident led to a heated correspondence in the newspapers. He was attacked by a writer signing himself "Patrick Henry," who was reported to be Adams himself, and defended by one calling himself "Onslow," who was Calhoun.¹ It was not agreeable to see the two highest officers of the government wrangling thus in the press; and it shows how far the vice-president had become actively enlisted in the attack on the administration.

The debate on the Panama Mission was drawn out until late in April, 1826; and although the delegates were despatched, it was too late for the congress, which adjourned after a short session without accomplishing anything. During the winter and spring the "Friends of Jackson," as the party called itself, made several minor moves against the President and his secretary of state. Amendments to the constitution were demanded prohibiting the appointment of congressmen to office, forbidding the reëlection of a President, and defining the powers of congress in regard to internal improvements so that state rights should not be imperiled. Resolutions were offered asking the President to report how many members of congress had been appointed to office by the Presidents since the adoption of the constitution. These attempts to involve Adams in the error of abusing the patronage seem absurd, coming from the party which was destined to go to the greatest extremes in the same direction. In

¹Hunt, *Life of Calhoun*, 58. The "Onslow" numbers are in Calhoun, *Works*, VI., 322-348.

fact, Adams was trying, much to his political damage, to resist the current, which then ran strongly for political appointments.

"Patronage," as then used, meant the expenditure of public money which brought benefits to a certain part of the voters. Benton uses the term to indicate all the national expenses except the public debt.¹ He speaks of "executive patronage," meaning political emoluments, as appointments and the public printing. He probably would have called appropriations for canals and roads some other kind of patronage. With the growth of the revenue came an enlargement of executive patronage, and in a system of appointments, which had no other test of merit than the judgment of the appointer, inefficient men came into office and political appointments were numerous. As long as there was no opposition party this made little difference, but with the organization of the Jackson group to embarrass Adams it was natural that the evils of the system should be saddled on him. Old republicans, country gentlemen, and many others believed that the tendency was dangerous; and the Jackson managers deemed it politically worth while to attack it. The appointment of Clay seemed in a striking manner to give opportunity to connect the administrations with the evil.

Macon was selected to bring the matter up in congress. At his suggestion a committee was appointed to bring in a report on the reform of executive patronage. May, 1826, Benton for the committee reported six bills and a long argument for reform. The bills dealt with the public printing, officers who handled the revenue, postmasters, cadets, and midshipmen, and provided that military and naval officers should not be dismissed from the service at the will of the President. The argument of the report was so sound that it has in later days been cited by civil service reformers as a landmark in the progress of their cause; but to

¹Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, I., 81.

apply it to Adams was absurd. How skilfully they attacked him is shown in the following extract:

The King of England is the "fountain of honor": the President of the United States is the source of patronage. He presides over the entire system of Federal appointments, jobs, and contracts. He has "power" over the "support" of the individuals who administer the system. He makes and unmakes them. He chooses from the circles of his friends and supporters, and *may* dismiss them, and upon all the principles of human action, *will* dismiss them, as often as they disappoint his expectations. His spirit will animate their actions in all the elections to State and Federal offices. There may be exceptions, but the truth of a general rule is proved by the exception.¹

The condition here described was a possibility, it was even a tendency of the day, but it is certain that Adams did all he could to resist it. The imputation that he did otherwise was a political *ruse de guerre*, unworthy of those who used it, but liable to be used by their opponents if opportunity offered. It also described exactly the condition the patronage was going to assume under Jackson triumphant.

A week later, Benton called up the bills and asked that Macon, who had long interested himself in the subject, be heard in their defense. But that gentleman announced that he was too ill at that time to assume the task and moved that the matter be laid on the table. It was not again taken up, which was probably as far as it was meant to carry it from the beginning. Ten days later congress adjourned, and the "Friends of Jackson" returned to their constituents. Another election was on hand, the issue of which justified all their hopes: both houses of congress passed into their control, and the result in 1828 seemed assured. They took courage and prepared for battle.

¹*Congressional Debates*, 1825-6, Vol. II., Part I., 672, 707; Part II., Appendix, 133, 136.

These charges against the administration seem rasping enough from the turbulent Benton, but they are especially unpleasant from the experienced and cultivated Calhoun. "It must be determined in the next three years," he wrote to Jackson, "whether the real governing principle in our system is to be the power and patronage of the Executive, or the voice of the people. For it is scarcely to be doubted that a scheme has been formed to perpetuate power in the present hands, in spite of the free and unbiased sentiment of the country; and, to express it more correctly, those now in power act on a scheme resting on the supposition, that such is the force of the Executive influence, that they, who wield it, can mould the public voice at pleasure, by an artful management of patronage."¹ Could Calhoun have believed his words, or did his desire to flatter the impulsive Jackson run away with his discretion?

The question of patronage being thus presented to the public, the managers turned to the bargain between Adams and Clay, chiefly with the purpose of breaking down Clay. All Jackson's utterances in this affair indicate his sincere belief in the charge. He was convinced that Buchanan in approaching him came with authority from Clay. But his managers were not so ingenuous. In October, 1826, Duff Green knew from Buchanan himself that the charge could not be substantiated, and yet he used it with the greatest assurance. "I had no authority," said the man from Pennsylvania, "from Mr. Clay or his friends to propose any terms to General Jackson, in relation to their votes, nor did I make any such proposition. . . . I am clearly of opinion that whoever shall attempt to prove by direct evidence any corrupt bargain between Mr. C—— and Mr. A—— will fail." For all this, Duff Green and his colleagues made the cry do their service.

¹Calhoun to Jackson, June 4, 1826, Jackson MSS.

²Buchanan, *Writings* (Moore, Editor), I., 218.

In the spring of 1825, Jackson, in his correspondence and his private conversation, spoke freely his belief in Clay's complicity in the affair. He said he would have been elected had the will of the people not been thwarted by this "Judas of the West." There is no reason to believe he did not speak as freely during the following two years to persons with whom he was thrown, but no such conversation was reported in the press, possibly because nothing was to be gained by it. But in March, 1827, an unsigned letter appeared in the Fayetteville, N. C., *Observer*, reporting a conversation at the "Hermitage," in which Jackson repeated explicitly the story that Clay's friends proposed to his friends to make him, Jackson, President if they were assured that Adams should not continue secretary of state. The letter was widely reprinted and called forth a card in which Clay denied all knowledge of such a bargain and said he doubted if Jackson made the statement attributed to him. Then the anonymous correspondent, Carter Beverly, of Virginia, uncovered himself, and called on Jackson to verify what was printed in the *Observer*. Jackson complied with becoming reluctance. It was true, he said, that in the privacy of his own fireside, he declared his belief, but since the matter was repeated abroad he did not hesitate to avow his opinion. He then repeated the substance of the proposition which he alleged the friends of Clay made to him in the beginning of January, 1825, which was that if assurances were given that Adams should not remain secretary of state, Jackson would have the support of Clay's friends.

When Clay saw this letter in print, he felt he could afford to reply. He published a denial and called for the name of the man who made the proposition to Jackson. He was duly informed that the proposition came from James Buchanan, of Pennsylvania, whose participation in the affair has already been discussed. Buchanan now published a statement which supported

Jackson's up to the critical point, and failed there because it did not allege that an actual bargain was offered. But it was strong enough for the Jackson papers, who heralded it as complete vindication of their hero. The hero himself, as we have seen, inwardly chafed because it was not more emphatic.¹ But the public were satisfied. If there were certain things lacking in the proof, did not Clay's acceptance of the secretaryship more than make up for them? The argument was effective with the least thoughtful part of the voters.

While this matter proceeded successfully for Jackson, the tariff question came up again and brought serious danger to his cause. The champions of protection were active in the North. They had passed beyond the infant-industry argument and were proclaiming the advantages of a home market through the growth manufacturing towns. The appeals were attractive to the farmers of Pennsylvania and New York, and found response even in the trans-Alleghany region, where all classes were enthusiastic for the development of their splendid resources. But the South was equally unanimous against the tariff. Virginia, strong in the old republican school, opposed it on constitutional grounds; South Carolina, more practical and less wedded to old theories, rested her opposition on sectional interests, and by strenuous fighting was becoming the leader of a new school of Southern politics. It seemed impossible to reconcile the two views, and herein lay Jackson's peril: for he depended as much on South Carolina and the far South as on Pennsylvania, New York,² and the West. It would take careful management to steer his cause safely between the groups. How cleverly it was done we shall see.

In the first place, his own record favored his plans. He voted in congress for a tariff which would develop the military resources of the country. This moderate position need alarm

¹See above, II., 361.

²W. L. Marcy to Van Buren, June 25, 1827; January 29, 1828; Van Buren Mss.

neither side. Such a man, said his friends in the North, could be relied on to see that the blessings of protection were not sacrificed to the Southern demands. Such a man, said his advocates in the South, could be relied on to oppose the selfish plans of that section which would build up their own interests at the expense of those of another. Adams and Clay stood openly for protection and were not embarrassed by defection in their camps.

In the second place, the Jackson congressmen and party workers generally were more anxious for the success of their presidential candidate than for the passage of a tariff. But they were afraid of their constituents North and South. The task, then, resolved itself into preparing a line of conduct which would satisfy the voters, and all the movers of the pawns were in secret accord as to the ethics of their conduct.

The plan followed is supposed to have been devised by Van Buren. Whether it was his or not, he gave his best efforts to carry it through. The speaker of the new house was Andrew Stevenson, of Virginia, an old republican who followed Van Buren into the Jackson camp. For some time committees had been non-partisan, which was not unnatural under Monroe's and Adams's policy of "amalgamation." But Stevenson signaled the advent of a new party system by giving their control to his own friends. He placed two Adams, and five Jackson men on the committee on manufactures, to which was allotted the task of bringing in the new tariff bill.

After much delay the committee introduced its bill. It happened then, as later, that states which wanted higher duties on most articles wanted lower rates on others. Thus, New England, demanding protection on her manufactures, asked for free raw materials. The bill now reported placed duties generally high on all articles, including the raw materials used in New England. The bill would please the Middle states and the West, but it would be unpopular in the South and New England. It was the

purpose of the framers to resist all attempts to amend the bill, in the belief that on the final vote it would be defeated through the decisive action of New England members. The South was induced to vote down all the New England amendments in the belief that the bill would thus finally be defeated, and the measure came to its last vote in nearly the same shape as it came from the committee. But here the unexpected happened: the South, as was anticipated, voted against the bill it had vigorously refused to amend, but enough New Englanders voted for it, with all its faults, to make it a law. Nobody but the Jackson managers was pleased with the result; but the political effects were good. The Southern members could report to their constituents that they voted against it, although they had not the satisfaction to say they defeated it. The Northern Jackson members could report that they voted for it. It was a lucky deliverance for the party.¹

The tariff of 1828 was only one incident in a campaign of excitement. Each party was bitter and personal in its abuse of the other. All the squabbles of Jackson's early life were brought up to show he was not fit to be President. The hanging of Arbuthnot and Ambrister, the unauthorized invasion of Florida, and the quarrel with Callava were cited to show his lack of respect for law. The execution of mutinous militiamen in the campaigns of 1813 and 1814 was recalled to show his ferocious temper; and when a Philadelphia editor published a hand-bill showing a coffin with the victims standing by its side, the idea was caught up eagerly and repeated in all parts of the country. Jesse Benton, the cause of the quarrel of 1813, also contributed his mite, a hand-bill in which his version of the dispute was given to show that Jackson was truculent and treacherous to an opponent. Van Buren thought that this abuse served to keep

¹Taussig, *Tariff History of the United States*, 5th edition, 86-103. In 1837, Calhoun in a speech in congress, explained this bargain, in which he thought the Southerners had been deceived. See his *Works*, III., 47.

the candidate's name before the people, who otherwise might have forgotten his pretensions.

The worst and least justifiable of these personal charges was reviving the story of his marriage. The irregularity of this ceremony was brought up to his disadvantage in his early career in Tennessee politics, and it was not to be expected that it should be omitted in this campaign; but we are hardly prepared to find that it was a main argument in the leading opposition newspapers. It appeared in the *National Journal*, a paper published in Washington, apparently under close supervision of the President. Jackson thought, and correctly, it seems, that if Adams had used his influence the matter would have been kept out of its columns. He held, therefore, that his antagonist was constructively responsible for the attack and felt justified in withholding from him the ordinary social courtesies of gentlemen.

Some of Jackson's supporters were willing to reply to these charges in kind, and the story was started that Adams, while minister to Russia, was concerned in delivering a beautiful American girl to a life of shame in order to gratify the lust of an aristocrat. The tale as told was entirely untrue. Duff Green, editor of the *Telegraph*, went even further. "I saw the necessity," he wrote, referring to the attack on Mrs. Jackson, "of bringing home the matter to Mr. Adams's own family and by threats of retaliation drove the *Journal* to condemn itself. This you have no doubt seen and understood. The effect here was like electricity. The whole Adams corps was thrown into consternation. They did not doubt that I would execute my threat, and I was denounced in the most bitter terms for assailing female character by those very men, who had rolled the slanders on Mrs. Jackson under their tongues as the sweetest morsel that had been dressed up by Peter Force and Co., during the whole campaign."¹ To this shameless avowal Jackson re-

¹Green to Jackson, July 8, 1827, Jackson MSS.

plied that it would be well now and then to throw into the enemy's camp a few firebrands in the shape of facts, "but that female character should never be introduced by my friends unless a continuation of attack should continue to be made against Mrs. Jackson, and that by way of *just retaliation* upon the *known* GUILTY. My great wish is that it may be altogether *evaded*, if possible, by my friends. *I never war against females*, and it is only the base and cowardly that do."¹

It was fortunate for Jackson that while these charges were being made, he was at the "Hermitage" under the soothing influence of Major Lewis and Judge Overton. Inwardly he raged, as is shown by an allusion to Clay in one of his letters. "I have lately got an intimation of some of his secret movements, which, if I can reach with positive and responsible proof, I will wield to his political and, perhaps, to his actual destruction. He is certainly the basest, meanest, scoundrel that ever disgraced the image of his god — nothing too mean or low for him to condescend to, *secretely* to carry his cowardly and base purposes of slander into effect: even the aged and virtuous female is not free from his secrete combinations of base slander — *but enough, you know* me, I will curb my feelings until *it becomes proper* to act, when retributive *justice* will visit him and *his panders heads*."²

In another case he was not so well controlled. In 1826, Southard, secretary of war, in a private conversation at Fredericksburg, Va., criticized the defense of New Orleans and praised Monroe's activity as secretary of war at the time, attributing to him much of the merit of saving the city. An exaggerated account was carried to Jackson, who wrote a severe letter to Southard and sent it unsealed by Samuel Houston. This messenger showed the communication to some of the party managers in Washington, who agreed that it ought not to be

¹Jackson to Green, August 13, 1827, Jackson Mss.

²Jackson to Houston, December 15, 1826, Jackson Mss.

delivered. It was, in fact, withheld and an appeal was made to the writer, with the result that some weeks later Southard received a written demand for an explanation. It contained no other denunciation than a cool statement that Jackson considered the criticism of his campaign as a blow from the administration. Southard in reply denied that he intended to reflect on the military conduct of his correspondent, and here the matter rested so far as the campaign was concerned;¹ but it was destined to play an important part in another interesting phase of our story.²

This incident illustrates Jackson's relation to his party managers. They were alarmed because they realized that his fiery temper was liable to burst forth at any time, and they took steps to restrain it. Several of them wrote him in the most cautious manner, urging such arguments as they believed must convince him that he ought to keep quiet. Eaton spoke earnestly: "Many friends," he wrote, "begged him to urge Jackson not to notice things Clay was saying." My reply to these anxious friends was, "'*Fear not*, General Jackson will not so far insult his friends as to take his own cause into his own hands and from his friends.' . . . They only ask of you under any and all circumstances, to be still and let them manage whatever is to be done.'" Caleb Atwater also wrote, from Ohio: "For Heaven's sake, for your country's sake, do remember that but one man can write you down — his name is Andrew Jackson."³

At first Jackson was not docile under these attempts at control. To Polk, who begged him to make no reply to an expected request for his views on internal improvements, he wrote with some spirit: "I have no disguise with my friends, but am not

¹Adams, *Memoirs*, VII., 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225; also Jackson to Houston, November 22, 1826, Jackson Mss. Jackson published in a pamphlet his two letters to Southard and the latter's reply.

²See below, II., 500.

³Eaton to Jackson, January 21, 1828, Jackson Mss.

⁴Atwater to Jackson, September 4, 1828, *Ibid.*

in the habit of gratifying enemies. I have nothing in my political creed to keep secrete, it was formed in the old Republican school, and is without change. I have no secretes, nor have I, nor do I wish to conceal my opinions on the powers of the general government, and those reserved to the states respectfully [*sic.*] as it respects internal improvements, I never have withheld them when I spoke upon this subject, and I am sure I never will, and I am sure the general government has no right to make internal improvements within a state, without its consent first had and obtained.”¹

So spoke the leader in December, 1826: a year later he was in a more cautious frame of mind and when he was appealed to for his opinion on the tariff, referred the inquirers to his votes in congress and his letter to Dr. Coleman.²

In this connection the following letter has much interest. It is written to Major Lewis from Washington, is signed “B ——,” and seems to come from Benton.

The present administration is the most effective enemy of internal improvements that has ever appeared among us. They are ruining the cause by prostituting it to electioneering, and will be attacked upon that ground. I think it probable that Jackson will be catechized upon this subject, either by some overzealous friend or insidious enemy. I have talked with V. B. and others about it. They think as I do, that things are well enough now and ought not to be disturbed. If, therefore, a friend should put interrogatories, we think he ought to be made to comprehend that there is no necessity for any public answer. If an enemy should do so, and at the same time be so respectable as to make an answer indispensable, we think that it ought to be given rather by a *general* reference to the votes given by J —— in the Senate than by a *particular* confession of faith. The right of the people to know the political sentiments of a public man, might be admitted; the declining of declaring these sentiments,

¹Jackson to Polk, December 27, 1826, Polk Calendar.

²Jackson to Polk, March 23, 1828, Polk Calendar.

on the eve of an election, might be stated; and then the necessity of a declaration in this case might be obviated by a general statement that his votes in the Senate would show his opinions. These votes will be satisfactory to most of the advocates of the doctrine, and at the same time, they do not go the whole length, as is well known in Virginia and elsewhere. If nothing but newspaper calls should be made, I think they should be left to newspaper answers. Adams's votes in the Senate upon this subject will be fully exposed. He voted against every measure of the kind ever proposed in that body while he was a member. These, with his old federal votes against the West and Louisiana will appear in bolder relief than they have ever yet been seen in. We are all divided here according to our politics, just as they were in '98. Our friends mean to fight it out; if they are conquered they want no quarter, and if they are victorious, they will cwe no favors.¹

A long letter to Jackson from Robert Y. Hayne has much of the same tenor, and throws some light on the character of the writer.

"We know Mr. Clay well enough to understand," he says, "the course that will be pursued in matters where his will is law. Altogether unprincipled, ambitious, daring, bold, and without the smallest regard either to the courtesies or decencies of life, he inspires his political followers with a spirit not unlike that which distinguishes a savage warfare, sparing no age, sex, or condition. There is still another motive that lurks beneath the unmanly and ungenerous course of the administration, it is the desire to betray you into some indiscretion. They have taken pains to impress the public mind with the belief that your *temper* unfits you for civil government. They know that a noble nature is always liable to excitement, and they have put, and will continue to put, into operation, a hundred schemes to betray you into some act or expression, which may be turned

¹"B" [Benton], to Jackson, February 22, 1827, Jackson Mss.

to their own advantage." Adams, he added, refused to answer political questions because he was President; and was not Jackson the saviour of his country and the representative of the people, equal to Adams in dignity?

Then Hayne came to affairs near his own heart, the tariff and Calhoun's position in the party. It is true, he said, that the Southern people "deny the power of Congress to legislate on these points,¹ yet we feel that our interests are safe in your hands." As for the party itself, its greatest danger was from dissensions between its parts, which before uniting with it had their own mutual differences.² It was a mild hint at the rivalry of Calhoun and Van Buren, then well established.

Thus labored the little group in Washington, Van Buren, hand in hand with the Tennesseans, and Calhoun's friends co-operating, all nervously anxious about their relations with the chieftain whose name was their best card. John Quincy Adams called them the "privy council," and they foreshadowed the "Kitchen Cabinet" not yet in existence. In Nashville a similar group was preparing pamphlets and newspaper articles in the common cause, its most appreciated work being a long defense of the marriage of the leader. In it were Judge Overton, a companion of Jackson's earliest days in the West and a true friend through life, and Major Lewis, whose personal influence with the candidate was strong for many years. Twenty-five years later, Parton, then writing his *Life of Jackson*, came strongly under the influence of Major Lewis, who made him believe that much of the political history of the period came out of the latter's activity. Later historians have been apt to speak of him as an astute and far-sighted party manager. From the many traces we have of him in the Jackson correspondence, the impression seems to be erroneous. Lewis had much to do

¹Hayne was referring to the tariff and internal improvements.

²Hayne to Jackson, June 5, 1827, Jackson MSS.

with appointments to office and with Jackson's conduct toward men, but others seem to have devised party moves. His letters show us a garrulous man, with no noticeable power of initiative, but industriously active in flattering his leader and ministering to his prejudices. It is probable that Jackson's advice to Polk in 1844, indicates Lewis's true ability: "Keep Blair's *Globe* the administration paper," he writes, "and William B. Lewis to ferret out and make known to you all the plots and intrigues hatching against your administration and you are safe."

Van Buren says that it was predicted in 1825, that Jackson's popularity would pass before 1828. The energy of his managers, and abuse from his opponents, gave the lie to the prophecy. By the end of 1827, Adams seemed sure of nothing but New England: to his enemy were conceded Pennsylvania, Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, with good prospects in the Northwest. The debatable states were New York, Missouri, Kentucky, and Louisiana. In all these states the greatest activity existed on each side.

The situation in New York was exceedingly important. Here the republicans were in two factions, Van Buren's, which supported Crawford in 1824, and De Witt Clinton's, which first supported him for the presidency in that campaign and later toyed with both Jackson and Adams. Clinton had long desired the presidency, but his lukewarmness toward the War of 1812, won him the opposition of the Virginians, who gave Tompkins the vice-presidency in 1816 and thus satisfied New York while they ignored Clinton.

After the election of 1825 Clinton coquetted with both parties. Adams refused to encourage him because it was unwise "to make one scale preponderate by weights taken from another."¹ He feared to offend Van Buren, of whose coöperation he had some hopes; but he only angered Clinton, and soon both republi-

¹Adams, *Memoirs*, VII., 185, 202. See also, Alexander, *Political History of New York*, I., 335-7.

can factions were supporting Jackson. Clinton desired the vice-presidency, and Van Buren seconded the pretension as a means of uniting the New York republicans and of embarrassing Calhoun. The Tennesseans were also favorable to Clinton. It shows how much the organic nature of the party was developed that Jackson remained apparently neutral to the matter. But Calhoun was deeply concerned,¹ and a lively dissension was imminent in the party when in February, 1828, Clinton died. Van Buren realized the importance of this event and moved quickly to capture the dead man's followers. With all solemnity the New York delegation arranged a memorial meeting for the deceased at which Van Buren presided and made a speech in honor of the man whom he had long opposed. Much other labor was expended on the subordinates in the faction, with the result that they came under the command of their old rival, but not in a very docile frame of mind. They retained much of their old feeling and made trouble in the distribution of federal offices, but they voted with the party and made Van Buren the topmost figure in New York politics.²

In the West the Clay support fought with great spirit and in Louisiana they were particularly vigorous. If we may believe Edward Livingston and other correspondents, federal office-holders in New Orleans were most partisan and worked continually for the administration. The same, it may be said, was alleged of the officials in parts of Ohio, while Adams complained that in the New York election of 1827, the federal officers in the state were against the administration.³ To overcome the opposition in Louisiana, and to make a good impression everywhere, it was planned to have on January 8, 1828, a great celebration of the battle of New Orleans. Jackson, who had

¹D. Green to Jackson, October 22; Branch to *Ibid*, December 11, 1827; Jackson MSS.

²Adams, *Memoirs*, VII., 370. P. N. Nicholas to Van Buren, October 13; Marcy to *Ibid*, December 10; J. A. Hamilton to *Ibid*, December 21, 1826; Van Ness to *Ibid*, February 22, 1827; Van Buren MSS.

³I. L. Baker to Jackson, September 1, 1827; E. Livingston to Jackson, August 12; *Ibid* to Jackson, November 15, 1828, Jackson MSS; Adams, *Memoirs*, VII., 349.

refused to visit a Kentucky watering-place for fear it might be pronounced electioneering, gave himself to the scheme and arrangements were made to make the occasion as conspicuous as possible. Politicians from as far as New York came to join the company of friends who escorted the leader. The occasion was made a fruitful scene of intrigue for the favor of the hero until some of his old and non-political friends became disgusted and were only induced to remain with the party by the argument that a withdrawal would be interpreted unfavorably by his enemies.¹ Jackson newspapers heralded the events of the journey far and near. A committee of citizens of New Orleans met him at Natchez, and the party arrived at the battle field on the anniversary of the victory. Four days were spent in festivities during which the city of New Orleans gave itself up to extravagant demonstrations of joy. Never was a historical celebration made to contribute to political ends with better success.

Jackson's utterances on this occasion were praised by his friends as illustrations of his eloquence and good sense. The public did not realize how well he was coached beforehand. Andrew P. Hayne, brother of the South Carolina senator and old companion in arms, took care that they should say just the right things. There were to be three speeches, he said to Jackson beforehand, but he hoped only one would be published; and there were two ideas he wanted to see in them: (1) that Jackson, like Cincinnatus, left his home at his country's call, performed the task required of him, and returned to his home again; (2) a mild but manly reference to the wicked attacks on Mrs. Jackson. Beside this he hoped that the speech would be entirely military and that the speaker, like Washington, would read it.² That Jackson carefully filed this communication among the papers

¹Dunlap to Jackson, August 10, 1831, Copy in Library of Congress. See also *American Historical Magazine* (Nashville), IX., 93.

²Hayne to Jackson, December 27, 1827, Jackson Mss.

he kept for the future historian shows that he valued highly the advice in it. John Quincy Adams tells us the speech delivered was written by Major Henry Lee, a ready hack writer of the time, then intimately associated with the general.¹

Already it was evident that the popular enthusiasm for Jackson was overwhelming. The frigid honesty of the existing President could not withstand its power, and he early foresaw the end. He was a bad loser, as his father was before him, and expressed his contempt for his detractors in language which might rather be expected from them. He confided to his diary that Ingham, Randolph, Hamilton, and some others were "skunks of party slander who had been squirting round the House of Representatives thence to issue and perfume the atmosphere of the Union."² For Calhoun he expressed an equally vigorous, if less picturesque, opinion. "Calhoun," he wrote, "is a man of considerable talent and burning ambition; stimulated to frenzy by success, flattery, and premature advancement; governed by no steady principle, but sagacious to seize upon every prevailing popular breeze to swell his own sails; showering favors with lavish hands to make partisans, without discernment in the choice of his instruments, and the dupe and tool of every knave cunning enough to drop the oil of fools in his ear."³

For Clay, also, the situation had little comfort, and he talked gloomily with his chief. When the latter remarked that after the people had four years of Jackson, they would be disgusted and turn to the Kentuckian, Clay said that the reaction would, indeed, come, but not till he was too old to profit by it. He was deeply dejected and offered to retire from the cabinet, but Adams, knowing this would be taken as a sign of defeat, urged him to take a rest instead.⁴ Thus, with discouragement for the ad-

¹Adams, *Memoirs*, VII., 477.

²*Ibid.*, VII., 431.

³*Ibid.*, VII., 447.

⁴*Ibid.*, VII., 382, 518, 520, 521.

ministration and with uproarious enthusiasm for its opponents the country came to the election day.

There could be no doubt of the result. The autumn was hardly at hand before congratulations began to arrive at the "Hermitage." They came from old friends and new ones, from those who offered sincere admiration and those who expected favors. Among the well-wishers was Gen. Thomas Cadwalader, of Philadelphia, social leader in the city and valuable salaried lobbyist for the United States Bank, who paid compliments to the fine climate, soil, and people of Nashville, invited Jackson to visit him in Philadelphia, and added: "Mrs. Cadwalader desires me to say that no endeavor will be spared to supply to Mrs. Jackson the places of those warm friends whom she will leave behind her." The Cadwaladers were as prominent in Philadelphia as the Livingstons were in New York and New Orleans. Did the doughty General Thomas dream of an influence over the incoming President like that which Edward Livingston established over him at New Orleans? If so, he was to be rudely disappointed. Jackson could see the difference between the efficient organizer of the resources of defense and the pompous agent of the bank, as our story will unfold later. Nor was Hayne, the nullifier, less courteous. He wrote that Mrs. Hayne would like to make any necessary arrangement for Mrs. Jackson's comfort before the arrival in Washington.'

The election results justified the expectations of both friends and flatterers. Every electoral vote south of the Potomac and west of the Alleghanies went for Jackson, together with those of Pennsylvania. All of New England except one vote in Maine, and all of Delaware and New Jersey were for Adams. New York gave twenty and Maryland five for Jackson and they gave respectively sixteen and six for Adams. In all, Jackson

¹Cadwalader to Jackson, June 21 and October 15, 1828, Jackson MSS

²Hayne to Jackson, December 18, 1828, Jackson MSS.

had one hundred and seventy-eight electoral votes and Adams had eighty-three. Calhoun had all the Jackson votes except seven of Georgia's nine, which Crawford's hatred took from him for the benefit of William Smith, of South Carolina.

The country now rang with shouts for the victor, and all eyes turned toward Nashville. There were political servitors who sought their reward, "old republicans" who rejoiced that the nationalizing tendencies of Adams were checked, believers in democracy, who thought that the reviving aristocracy was crushed, and low tariff men who considered the defeat of Clay a public blessing. All turned expectantly to the one who had saved them. Bustle invaded the quiet of the "Hermitage," and rejoicings mingled with preparations for a new phase of life for its occupants. In Nashville men of both parties united to give their first citizen a public dinner, which should be worthy of his success. Suddenly all these expressions of joy withered before the brief illness and death of Mrs. Jackson.

Spite of its irregularity Jackson's marriage was a very happy one. His wife had little education, but she was naturally intelligent; and she had that intense feeling for goodness and innate beauty which sanctifies love. She had the esteem of most of the people who knew her, and some of her friends loved her deeply. She was fond of young people and assumed a motherly attitude toward them which they appreciated highly. To a large circle of such admirers she was known as "Aunt Rachael." Her affection was deep enough to win her husband's strong nature and make him her lover as long as he lived. Her devotion to religion broke down his indifference on that subject — he was, it seems, never antagonistic to it — and he became in the latter part of his life a loyal, if not a devout, Presbyterian.

His care of his wife was constant, and he never forgave those who injured her. Much as he was enraged by the attacks on her in the campaign of 1828, he kept from her all knowledge

that her name was used until she accidentally discovered the fact after the election. An account of her death which has survived among those who were most intimately associated with him presents the following story: About a month after the election, she drove into Nashville to purchase clothes for use in her new station. She was quite happy in the occasion and went from shop to shop with interest till her strength was gone. Then she retired to the private office of a newspaper editor, one of her relatives, to rest until her carriage was ready for the return. Here she came upon a copy of the pamphlet issued by her husband's friends in her defense. It came as a surprise and she was overwhelmed. When her companions came an hour later, they found her crouching in a corner, weeping and hysterical. On her way home she made every effort to resume her composure, so as to avoid giving pain to her husband, but she was not successful. The forced gaiety which she assumed attracted his attention at once and he had the story of the day's happening. From that time, says the narrative, she grew worse, at last taking to her bed and dying on December 23d.¹ For some years her health had been poor, and the final collapse was attributed to heart disease, but Jackson believed that her grief was a cause. The blow left him dazed, and he sat by the body for a whole night in the belief that life was not entirely extinct. He buried her in the garden at the "Hermitage," near the little Presbyterian church which, chiefly from his own funds, he built in 1823 for her gratification.² One of the last acts before his departure for Washington was to order a suitable monument for the grave.

Mrs. Jackson's memory was after this the gentlest spot in his life. When accusations were brought against the good name

¹The author had this account from Mrs. Elizabeth Blair Lee, daughter of F. P. Blair, Sr., who remembered it from her youth, when she had it from Major Lewis. She considered it probable; but Parton, who had a marked faculty for using a good story, and who used Lewis freely, says nothing of it.

²A receipt among his papers, 1823, shows that he gave \$150 to its erection and furnished materials; but for the latter he rendered a bill.

of Mrs. Eaton, it was sufficient for him that she had been received by his departed wife. His wife's natural goodness and strength of character won the respect of many of his friends. She was in Washington with him during the winter of 1824-5, and one of the acquaintances she made was Lafayette, who stopped at the same hotel with her. When she was dead he expressed his sympathy to Jackson in a letter in which he said: "You know how very kind and affectionate your excellent lady has been to me; the opportunities I had to appreciate her worth had more particularly attached me to her. I was daily anticipating the general approbation she could not have failed to obtain in her situation."¹

Many years afterward, the "Hermitage" became the object of pilgrimage for patriotic and curious travelers, and an old servant of its former owner was employed to show it to such visitors. He had a reverent respect for Jackson and would show, with great pride, the objects associated with the general's political and military life. In Jackson's bedroom was a picture of Mrs. Jackson, which the old Negro would describe as follows: "This is de picture of Miss Rachael. Every morning de general would kneel before it and tell his God that he thank him to spare his life one more night to look on de face of his love." •

But however crushing the personal affliction, political affairs did not wait. The funeral was hardly over before the preparations for Washington demanded his attention. He hurriedly gathered up his thoughts and turned his face toward a new field of duty.

¹Lafayette to Jackson, February 26, 1829, Jackson MSS.

CHAPTER XX

CABINET-MAKING AND THE INAUGURATION

IT WAS the middle of January, 1829, when Jackson set out for Washington amid the plaudits of his countrymen. Reform of abuses was the cry of the campaign just ended, and he was gratefully hailed as the giver of better things. One admirer thanked God that he had seen the overthrow of John I and John II, and he hoped he would not live to see another of that race and the same country on the throne.¹ John Brown, of Virginia, who described himself as "an old revolutionist and one of your warmest friends, and an individual of the near two hundred thousand freemen, which I hope have taught congress a lesson not soon to be forgotten," also gave his opinion of the situation. He was especially anxious that the "court etiquette and pompous parade" in Washington be reformed. Such display was not in keeping with republicanism. It is true it was practised by "General La Fayette," but he could be forgiven because he had the "volatile fancy of a Frenchman." The writer did not think such flattery could please any really wise man, and he hoped Jackson would discourage it. It was the simple letter of a countryman, a man who held the views of the people around him, but Jackson did not disdain the advice; and he filed the letter after endorsing it thus, "a friendly letter — worth reading — private."² Jackson was an average man; and his power to appreciate the views of average men was one of his best traits.

¹D. C. Ker to Jackson, November 11, 1828, Jackson Mss.

²John Brown to Jackson, March 10, 1829, Jackson Mss.

The President-elect proceeded on his journey by easy stages. From Nashville he reached the Ohio at Louisville, thence up the river to Pittsburg, and at last over the mountains to the capital. Duff Green, desiring that he should appear under the prestige of the Calhoun faction, planned a great cavalcade to meet him at Pittsburg and escort him by relays to the end of the journey. But Van Buren opposed the scheme on the ground that it would be unacceptable to Jackson, and it was abandoned.¹ The people along the route made up by their enthusiasm all the *éclat* that was lost in the absence of an escort. At last the party came to Washington on February 11th, the day the electoral votes were counted in the senate.²

The city was full of anxious faces. So much had been said about electioneering by office-holders that it was generally believed that wholesale removals would be made. Later, when dismissals for cause did not yield enough vacancies to satisfy the many applicants they insisted that removals without cause should be made, and the demand was frequently granted.

Office-seekers and others flocked to Jackson's hotel, urging their claims on him and on whatever friend they thought had influence with him. For Adams, whose gifts were all exhausted, they had no thought. Even Jackson ignored him. On the ground that Adams was responsible for the continuance of the attacks on Mrs. Jackson, he refused to make the usual call of the incoming upon the outgoing President. A few confidential friends consoled the correct and unbending New Englander; he remained in the White House until the day before the inauguration, when he removed to a place on Meridian Hill, near the western boundary of the city, and left his rival to take informal possession of the official residence.

When Jackson arrived, February 11th, cabinet-making was already the chief object of interest. A small group of confidants

¹J. A. Hamilton to Jackson, November 24, 1828, Jackson Mss.

²Niles, *Register*, XXXV, 401, 409.

gathered to advise with him, and the remainder of the political world looked on as rumors came from the centre regarding the fate of one or another aspirant for office. Senators White and Eaton and Major Lewis were continually with him. Van Buren was absent, detained in Albany by his duties as governor; but he was represented at Washington by J. A. Hamilton, who wrote frequently about the progress of events.

The onlooking politicians were divided, according to their interests, into several groups. Most noticeable were the supporters of Van Buren. They had a certain theoretical alliance with the constitutional views of the Crawford party, but their chief concern at this time was the future of their leader and the distribution of state offices. For some time it was known that the New Yorker would have choice of the cabinet positions. He was, next to Calhoun, the ablest man in his party, and his party services were preëminent. In 1828, he resigned his seat in the senate and ran for governor of his state, because it would unite the party for the benefit of Jackson. The appointment was, therefore, eminently proper from a party standpoint, and it was filled with credit, as later events showed. Some of his friends desired him to become secretary of the treasury because of the large number of offices to be disposed of in that department,¹ but the secretaryship of state was offered, and accepted, because its incumbent, by the prevailing opinion, was heir-apparent. Jackson offered the state department on February 15th, after consultation with Hamilton; and it was accepted on the 20th, with the stipulation that it should not be necessary for the duties to be taken up until the legislature of New York should adjourn, probably at the end of March.²

To fill the office temporarily, became the object of one of the

¹Silas Wright, Jr., to Van Buren, December 9, Verplanck to *Ibid.*, December 6; Thomas Ritchie to *Ibid.*, March 11, 1828; Van Buren MSS.

²Jackson to Van Buren, February 15; Van Buren to Jackson, February 20; J. A. Hamilton to Van Buren, February 12, 1829; Van Buren MSS.

minor moves on the board. Hamilton desired the position and Van Buren approved of his ambition; but an obstacle appeared in Henry Lee, a scheming hack writer, who had attached himself to the Nashville group and who by flattery of Lewis and by a plan to write a life of Jackson had worked himself into favor. The gravest charges were alleged against his private life, but this seems not to have been known to Jackson. Lee now desired to be chief clerk in the state department, an office held long and efficiently by Daniel Brent; and if Lee were chief clerk it ought to devolve on him to preside over the department during the absence of the secretary. Hamilton, therefore, set his face to defeat the hope of Lee, who was strongly fortified because he had a letter of endorsement from Lewis. He attacked his opponent on the ground of moral character. White, to whom he took his complaint, was shocked at the state of the case, declared that Lee must be shaken off and said that he would be considered an offense, if the truth were known, to the honor of the general. He also condemned "in unmeasured terms" Lewis, whose error of judgment is very evident. The upshot was that Van Buren interfered and wrote to Jackson asking that Hamilton might be secretary *pro tempore*, and the request was granted.¹ Lee was shunted off into a small foreign consulship, for which the senate rejected him. He was deeply disappointed and turned against the administration.

Calhoun's influence hung over all cabinet appointments, although it is impossible to connect him directly with any one selection. Van Buren's friends feared him greatly, but they dared not oppose him openly. They were disposed to credit him with more ability in intrigue than he possessed, and some of them even thought that bringing Van Buren into the cabinet was a scheme by which the latter could be discredited before the country. When it was seen how weak was the cabinet,

¹J. A. Hamilton to Van Buren, January 1, February 12, 18 and 25, 1820; Van Buren MSS.

Van Buren himself had doubts, as we shall see, about the wisdom of his acceptance.¹

Pennsylvania offered two candidates for position, S. D. Ingham and Henry Baldwin. Jackson favored the latter on personal grounds, but the Calhoun interest in the state centered so strongly on the former that he yielded, and it was decided that Ingham should have an offer of a cabinet position. Calhoun's strong supporters pressed him for secretary of the treasury, finding, it seems, some fitness in giving the second place in the cabinet to a Calhoun man, if Van Buren was to have the first.²

In this affair Calhoun himself was in a rather delicate situation because his own state was opposed to Ingham, and supported for second choice a man who had the backing of Van Buren himself. They were committed to nullification in its first stages and did not want to see the treasury controlled by a man with the tariff views of the Pennsylvanian school. They urged Langdon Cheves, of their own state, and if he could not be appointed, Lewis McLane, of Delaware. Cheves was soon seen to be out of the question, and they clung to McLane the more fiercely; but he had no chance, although Van Buren himself wrote a letter in his behalf to Eaton. Another aspirant was Albert Gallatin, whom Van Buren, through Hamilton, suggested for treasurer. The approach was made through Lewis, who rejected it at once saying: "The old man, if he comes here, *will have the whole credit of the administration. There is no use in having him. He wanted to be Secretary of the Treasury.*"³

Another object of concern was John McLean, of Ohio. He was in Calhoun's interest and was looked upon with disfavor by the Van Buren men.⁴ He was postmaster-general under Adams and

¹E. K. Kane to Van Buren, February 19, 1829, Van Buren Mss.

²L. McLane to Van Buren, February 19; J. Hamilton, Jr., to Van Buren, February 19, 1829; Van Buren Mss.

³J. A. Hamilton to Van Buren, March 6, 1829, Van Buren Mss.

⁴*Ibid* to *Ibid*, February 13, 1829, Van Buren Mss.

used his office against the election of his superior. He could not be ignored, because of his recognized ability, and he caused some embarrassment by aspiring to a higher rank than he then held. Moreover, he was popular in the West and with the Methodists in the country at large. It was good policy to keep him in the cabinet, and after much hesitation he consented to remain where he was, his office being raised to full cabinet rank, which before this it did not have.

In the meantime, the Virginians stood pathetically aside. It was the first cabinet-making in our history in which they had no share. Mr. Speaker Stevenson, Editor Ritchie, and others waited in vain to be called into council. Van Buren, old Crawford leader and friend of the new régime, received their confidences, as we may see in his correspondence, but did nothing.

Jackson was not favorable to Virginia, but Calhoun urged that some attention be shown and L. W. Tazewell was offered the war department. He refused it, probably because he wanted nothing less than first place. He was then assigned to the British mission and accepted it; but March 11th, when popular opinion ran strongly against the new administration, he declined it on the ground of business interests.¹ When Tazewell was passed over for cabinet rank, Virginians turned to P. P. Barbour, whom they desired to make attorney-general.

The war department was given to Senator Eaton. Jackson said he thought he ought to be allowed to have a personal friend in the cabinet, on whose confidential advice he might lean,² and no one objected. The choice was between Senators White and Eaton. The following extract from a letter from Eaton to his colleague seems to indicate that it was left to the two men to decide which should be chosen.

¹Hamilton, J. A., *Reminiscences*, 91.

²L. McLane to Van Buren, February 19, 1849, Van Buren MSS.

A letter, received some time ago, from General Jackson, stated he desired *you* or *me* to be near him. In a recent conversation with him, he remarked that he had had a full and free conversation with you; and at the close remarked that he desired to have me with him. I presumed, without inquiring, that he had probably talked with you on the subject, and that you had declined accepting any situation, as you before had told me would be your feelings. Nothing definite has taken place on this matter between General Jackson and myself, and I hope you know me well enough, and my regard and friendship for you, to know this, that I should never permit myself to stand in competition with any desire you may entertain. If you have any desire, say so to me *in confidence*, and it shall so be received. If you have none, then in reference to any and all considerations I should consent to any such appointment. Think of this and give me your opinion frankly.¹

White was a man of honor and has preserved the respect of the historian. He could do nothing but decline to stand in the way of his friend, which is undoubtedly what Eaton expected of him.

The navy department went to John Branch, senator from North Carolina and former governor. He was noted for nothing but his good dinners and correct manners; and the impression got abroad that he was brought forward because it was felt that something must be done to promote the social prestige of the new party. Eaton stood strongly for Branch,² however, and it is reasonable to assume that he did so because he wanted to withstand Virginia's claims, which were pressed in favor of Tazewell and probably because he felt that the weak-willed Branch would at least be manageable. The appointment displeased many people, and McLane probably voiced a general opinion when he wrote: "By what interest that miserable old woman, Branch, was ever dreamed of no one can tell."³

¹Eaton to White, February 23, 1829, *Memoirs of H. L. White*, 266.

²C. P. Van Ness to Van Buren, March 9, 1832, Van Buren MSS.

³McLane to Van Buren, February 19, 1829, Van Buren MSS.

The attorney-generalship only remained unprovided for. The Virginian leaders were especially anxious about this office; and Ritchie, sending suggestions on the subject, made it plain that there ought to be "a strong constitutional Attorney-General."¹ P. P. Barbour proved to be the Virginia candidate; and he and Berrien, of Georgia, finally were the two leading candidates. The Tennessee managers were for the latter, and he was selected, Eaton's influence being the determining factor.²

Ten days after the arrival of Jackson all these arrangements were made. Intimations of what was going on reached the outer group of politicians from time to time. They did not know what was happening, but realized that they were ignored. The South Carolina school with Hayne and James Hamilton, Jr., at their head, and the Virginians, led by Stevenson, Archer, and Tazewell, were much chagrined. One morning the *Telegraph* announced that the President-elect would be glad to see persons who desired to offer advice about the cabinet; but not one of them budged toward Jackson's lodgings, by this time popularly dubbed "the Wigwam."³ February 17th, by one account, he told Calhoun that he had the highest confidence in these gentlemen, calling several Virginians and South Carolinians by name, and would like to confer with them. They called immediately. Hamilton, of South Carolina, was spokesman and began by praising the selection of Van Buren. Then he came to the chief point of his anxiety. There was, he said, great concern about the treasury. Here Jackson interposed, saying Ingham was to have that place to meet the united demand of the Pennsylvania delegation. Then Hamilton suggested that Cheves would be suitable for secretary of the treasury, but

¹From a memorandum in Jackson's handwriting headed "Mr. R——e, R——, Va." It contains suggestions for cabinet members and seems to be based on a conversation, either directly or indirectly. It is without date; Jackson Mss.

²C. P. Van Ness to Van Buren, March 9, 1832, Van Buren Mss; J. A. Hamilton's assertion (*Reminiscences*, page 91), that Berrien was a Calhounite was probably an afterthought.

³Mrs. M. B. Smith, *First Forty Years of Washington Society* (G. Hunt, Editor), 283.

Jackson replied that this was impossible. He also set aside the suggestion that it be McLane and closed the interview by saying that he should take a middle course on the tariff, striving to pay the debt and taking steps to reform the public service. With this the conference ended. The invited gentlemen went home dazed and indignant. They went to the meeting to give advice; and not to learn that all was arranged. "I assure you," said James Hamilton, jr., in closing his account of the interview, "in the words of Sir Anthony Absolute, 'I am perfectly cool — damn cool — never half so cool in my life'." McLane spoke more plainly. "How lamentably," he exclaimed, "stands the old man on his two prominent grounds of commitment — a reasonable disregard of old party distinctions, and an unnecessary resort to congress for cabinet appointments." All the circle were drawn from one party and four of them were from congress, three of the four being "of the least capacity."¹

The announcement of the cabinet could now no longer be delayed. The first impression was unfavorable. J. A. Hamilton later said it was "the most unintellectual cabinet we ever had."² Besides those who were disappointed, there were many who were grieved to see inexperienced men selected. But most singularly the first opposition was from Tennessee, where Eaton was well known. The state's delegation protested against his appointment. They did not like his ambition and his evident purpose to manage the President. The protest was futile. Jackson declared that it made him feel well again to get such opposition and sent the delegation a severe reproof.³ It was not like him to give up a friend because objection was made to him.

The cabinet was a surprise to Van Buren himself. No one, he says, was more disappointed than he, and, he added, Ingham

¹Hayne to Van Buren, February 14; J. Hamilton, Jr., to *Ibid*, February 19; L. McLane to *Ibid*, February 14; and J. A. Hamilton to *Ibid*, February 14; 1829—; Van Buren Mss.

²Hamilton, *Reminiscences*, 215.

³J. A. Hamilton to Van Buren, February 23, 1829; Van Buren Mss.

was the only appointee whom he had heard mentioned beforehand for the cabinet.¹ McLane advised him directly to have nothing to do with the administration, and in Washington, other friends spoke to the same effect. Lewis was uneasy lest Van Buren's assent be withdrawn, and assured J. A. Hamilton that Van Buren was not out of favor. Jackson was somewhat concerned till assured that the New Yorker would accept. Lewis summed up the situation in saying: "It is a Cabinet which is decidedly favorable to Van Buren. He has not a more devoted friend than Eaton, and Branch is the same." "Be assured Calhoun is disappointed," adds Hamilton, "and he now hopes that Jackson may be thrown into his arms by your refusal."²

This ebullition served to draw the line between the specific Jackson faction, and the old controlling force in the republican party. It also aroused Jackson's resentment against the Virginians and anti-tariff South Carolinians. It was not a serious affair; and Cambreleng estimated it rightly when he wrote to Van Buren, March 1st:

The short and long of the matter is this — The democrats are all not only satisfied but gratified with the cabinet, while the whole federal phalanx is shocked at the idea that the plebeian race should have the ascendancy in the councils of the President. The cabinet is infinitely better for harmony, for all practical purposes, for the interest of *New York*, and for the country than it would have been if the treasury had been occupied by a gentleman of the immoveable pertinacity of Mr. Cheves and the navy by the vanity and eccentricity of Mr. Tazewell. You would have had all leaders and no wheel-horses, and the first hill you reached would have upset you all. Murmurings are now pretty secret. But when Mrs. L——, Mrs. H——, Mrs. S——, and Mrs. McL—— hold one of their caucuses, ye gods what a storm!"

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, I., 15, Van Buren Mss.

²J. A. Hamilton to Van Buren, February 21, 1829, Van Buren Mss.

³Cambreleng to Van Buren, March 1, 1829; Van Buren Mss. Probably Mrs. Livingston, Mrs. Hayne, Mrs. Sargeant and Mrs. McLane.

The prediction of Cambreleng proved correct. James Hamilton, jr., before a month passed, wrote that he was satisfied with the cabinet. He added with characteristic bluntness that he learned "that old venal Swiss Gallatin is fishing for France. I hope to God that the General will not disgrace himself by countenancing the rapacity of this old vulture. . . . Thank God I want nothing for myself, as I would not give a damn 'to call the king my Brother.'"

Another echo of public opinion in South Carolina came from Dr. Thomas Cooper, long an extreme republican and then president of the state university. Van Buren he wrote confidently, was now the "master mover" at Washington, adding "take care to be so. You aspire to the succession: do not count on New England but look to the South and West: your great competitor will be Calhoun, but support of internal improvements will sink him unless he repudiates it." Cooper closed by urging that South Carolina would secede if the tariff policy of the past was continued. The letter shows how close Van Buren up to this time was to the nullifiers, and how little they were associated as yet with Calhoun.¹

Before Jackson's administration fairly began, his cabinet lost one of its strongest men in the resignation of John McLean. It was with reluctance that he consented to remain postmaster-general, and his unwillingness increased as the days went by. There was vacancy on the supreme court bench, and the day after the inauguration McLean expressed his willingness to take that instead of a cabinet position. The suggestion pleased Lewis and the Van Buren men, for it gave them a chance to remove a Calhoun supporter from the President's council; but they had to overcome one obstacle. W. T. Barry, the recently defeated Jackson candidate for governor of Kentucky, was slated for the

¹J. Hamilton, Jr., to Van Buren, March 25, 1829; Van Buren MSS.

²Thomas Cooper to Van Buren, March 24, 1829. Van Buren MSS.

court vacancy and it was proposed that he should exchange places with McLean. The Jackson supporters from that state opposed Barry's elevation to the bench because he was of the relief party in Kentucky politics,¹ but with some difficulty they were brought to consent to his nomination. They must now be induced to consent to place him in a still higher position, and the appointing council realized that it was difficult. J. A. Hamilton undertook to convince one of them, T. P. Moore, of Kentucky, taking him before breakfast, because, as he said, a man is not so proud when his stomach is empty. The result justified the tactics, but it is not certain whether it was the hour of approach or some intimation of the appointment as minister to Columbia, which Moore later received, that worked his conversion. "Calhoun," says Hamilton in reporting the affair to his leader, Van Buren, "is cut up by this measure, as is very manifest. He begins to feel that there is an influence beyond that he can hope to exercise." Branch, Eaton, and Berrien were opposed to the change because they thought it would weaken the cabinet.² They were right: Barry was in no sense fitted for the position, and through his inefficiency the post-office came into great confusion.

In actual operation, the cabinet proved better than was expected, partly on account of the superior administrative ability of the secretary of state and partly because it existed during quiet times. Ingham succeeded in the treasury at a time when there were no financial difficulties. Eaton made a good secretary of war when the only business of his department related to Indians, and Branch made no mistakes in managing a navy which could hardly be said to exist. McLane hesitated to become attorney-general because, as was said, he feared to encounter

¹The relief party favored the relief of debtors, opposed the United States Bank, and advocated the overthrow of the old courts which declared their measures unconstitutional. See Sumner, *Life of Jackson*, Chap. VI.

²J. A. Hamilton to Van Buren, February 27, and March 6 (2), 1829, Van Buren MSS.

at the bar Webster and Wirt,¹ but Berrien, a weaker man took the office without fear, and was lucky enough to survive. Barry alone fell into positive disgrace through mismanagement. The reorganization of the cabinet two years after it was appointed may, however, have saved other departments from misfortune.

These events mark the last stage in the disintegration of the Virginia hegemony. A new combination was formed in which the West and Southwest were the controlling force, and that region took two places in the cabinet. The two extremes of the old combination, New York and Georgia, were bound to the new by the gift of two cabinet positions, and another symbolized the loyalty of Pennsylvania. The old slave states could not be ignored, but here the representation went to North Carolina. This large but unaggressive state had generally followed Virginia's leadership, and it was good policy to cut it away from the old alliance, which was thus shorn of influence at every point. The proud old state accepted the situation with as good grace as possible. The announcement of her humiliation produced astonishment in Richmond, and "it required," said Stevenson, "all our skill and prudence to quiet" the people.²

But the task of reburnishing the state's prestige was better assigned to Ritchie, whom the picturesque Randolph called with some exaggeration "the Janus-faced editor of the Richmond *Enquirer*, who has contrived to keep in with every administration, save the short reign of John Adams, the second, and then he kept an anchor out to windward for Henry Clay." Ritchie wrote to Editor Noah, of New York, co-worker in the cause of democracy:

I am deeply sensible of the compliment you pay to the principles of Virginia. But I have no idea that the sceptre will come

¹Verplanck to Van Buren, December 6, 1828, Van Buren Mss.

²A. Stevenson to Van Buren, April 19, 1829, Van Buren Mss.

³Colton, *Private Correspondence of Henry Clay*, 363.

round to her, for several years to come. We are content to be without it; and even without any hand in the administration. If General Jackson can do better elsewhere be it so; but we shall not, on this account, be less anxious to support the administration of the man we have supported, if he guides his course by liberal and enlightened principles. I pledge you my honor that all the little hints you may have seen in the coalition prints about the discontent and disaffection of Virginia are utterly false and unfounded.

As for the future, said Ritchie, all his hopes were in Van Buren, in whose "tact, sagacity, and knowledge of mankind, temper and admirable talents" he had confidence. "But all these will be of little avail unless he has the courage to tell General Jackson the truth. Some of his friends have doubts on this respect. I confess I have none . . . If you should see Mr. Van Buren, be so good as to present this subject in the most striking way you see best."¹

The only glimpses we get of the inner working of the circle which considered the cabinet appointments indicates that Jackson was the final appeal in the selections. Thus, Hamilton in one letter says that Jackson and White are going to ride and he thinks much will be settled on the ride. He was a man difficult to move when his mind was made up; but he was approachable to influence before he decided. Like most men of passion, his choice could be determined by some trifle of temper or accidental mood, and for this reason those who sought to direct his will were ever cautious about their manner of approach.

Cabinet-making was soon forgotten in the delights of the inauguration. Ten thousand visitors crowded Washington to see their favorite take the oath-of office. "I never saw such a crowd before," said Webster. "Persons have come five hun-

¹Ritchie to Noah, March 15, 1829; Van Buren Mss.

dred miles to see General Jackson, and they really seem to think that the country is rescued from dreadful danger."

March 4th was a sunny day with a suggestion of spring. "By ten o'clock," says an eye-witness who was not a Jacksonian, "the Avenue was crowded with carriages of every description, from the splendid Baronet and coach, down to wagons and carts, filled with women and children, some in finery and some in rags, for it was the people's President; the men all walked."

Before noon the steps, porticos, the surrounding terraces, and the large enclosed yard to the east of the capitol were alive with humanity. Francis Scott Key, long used to great spectacles, looked on from the gate of the yard and exclaimed, "It is beautiful, it is sublime!" At length persons on the west front, looking down Pennsylvania Avenue, the view of which was then not obstructed by the trees in the grounds, saw a small company, approaching on foot. All wore their hats but a tall gentleman in the middle, whose erect figure and white head were recognized as Jackson's. The procession followed the avenue up the hill on the south side of the capitol, and crowds rushed thither to get a view of the hero. "There, there, that is he," exclaimed some, "he with the white head." "Ah," murmured others, "there is the old man and his gray hair, there is the old veteran, there is Jackson!" Through such eager, pressing crowds he passed slowly into the capitol.

On the east front the crowd awaited the taking of the oath and after that the address. On the portico was a table covered with a red cloth, behind it, the closed door from the rotunda. The portico and the steps were filled with ladies in gay colors, the ground was covered with the expectant multitude, "not a ragged mob, but well dressed and well behaved, respectable and worthy citizens." At length the door behind the table opened. Out came the marshals, the judges of the supreme court, and behind

them, the white-haired Jackson. He bowed gravely to the people, who responded with a great shout in unison. Then came the inaugural address, read in a low voice, which many strained their ears in vain to hear. Then the oath was administered by the chief justice, the aged Marshall, whose life was a protest against the political views of the Jackson party, and an attendant presented the Bible. Taking it in his hands, the President kissed it, laid it down reverently, and bowed again to the people. At this his admirers, no longer restrained, rushed past the officials up the steps and seized his hand to congratulate him. With difficulty, he pushed through the throng to a gate, at which his horse awaited him. Here he managed to mount and set off for the White House followed by a promiscuous multitude in carriages, in carts, on horseback, and afoot. "Countrymen, farmers, gentlemen, mounted and dismounted, boys, women and children, black and white" were in the train.

At the Mansion, refreshments had been provided for a large number of ladies and gentlemen; but there were no police arrangements to preserve order and the rabble rushed in with the better class of people. They crowded around the President until he was only saved from bodily harm by some gentlemen, who made a circle in front of him and kept back the intruders by main force. He shook hands with the curious until at last he was glad to escape by a side entrance to his lodgings at Gadsby's hotel. The rabble fell on the refreshments, jostling the waiters as they appeared at the doors, breaking the china and glassware, standing in muddy boots on damask covered chairs, spoiling the carpets, and creating such a press that it was no longer possible for those on the inside to escape by the doors. The windows were used for exits for the suffocating masses. Mrs. Smith, who visited the place after three in the afternoon, found the President gone and the parlors in possession of "a rabble, a mob of boys, Negroes, women, children, scrambling,

fighting, romping." Several thousand dollars' worth of broken china and cut glass and many bleeding noses attested the fierceness of the struggle. Where the chaos would have ended is not to be determined had not some sagacious ones thought of the expedient of sending tubs of punch out to the lawn and thus turned aside a part of the incoming stream.¹ Among the guests was James Hamilton, Jr., the nullifier, whose description of the scene is as follows:

'It was a glorious day yesterday for the *sovereigns*, who assembled here to the amount of 15 or 20,000, who hailed the chief with the most enthusiastic applause, and greetings. The ceremony went off well, and the principal person acquitted himself with a grace and a 'composed dignity' which I never saw surpassed. The address itself is excellent, chaste, patriotic, sententious, and dignified. It says all that is necessary to say on such an occasion and exposes no weak flanks that it may be necessary [to] defend hereafter. As far as I have heard (although I confess I have not conversed with the ultra-tariff men), it has given universal satisfaction. It has a commendable brevity, the limits of which I hope in none of his state papers he will ever transcend.

After the ceremony the old chief retired to the Palace where we had a regular Saturnalia. The mob broke in, in thousands. Spirits black, yellow, and grey, poured in in one uninterrupted stream of mud and filth, among the throngs many subjects for the penitentiary and not the fewest among them where [*sic*] Mr. Mercer's tyros for Liberia. It would have done Mr. Wilberforce's heart good to have seen a stout black wench eating in this free country a jelly with a gold spoon at the President's House. However, notwithstanding the row Demus kicked up the whole matter went off very well through the *wise neglect* of that great apostle of the "fierce democracy," the chairman of the central committee, which body corporate, so far from being defunct by the election of Old Hickory, seems now to have

¹This account is based on the narrative of Mrs. M. B. Smith, *First Forty Years of Washington Society* (Hunt, Editor), 290-298. The quotations in the text are from this work.

gathered fresh vitality and has, I believe, even taken the old man under their parental guardianship.¹

The inaugural address which pleased Hamilton was not the one which Jackson brought with him to the capital. In the large collection of papers which the general left to posterity is a copy of the inaugural address in his own hand, and indorsed by him, "Rough Draft of the Inaugural Address." As an expression of ideas, language, and political principles, it is the best outcome of the thinking of this remarkable self-made statesman and, in spite of its length, it deserves publication. It reads:

Fellow Citizens:—About to enter upon the duties to which as president of the United States, I have been called by the voluntary suffrages of my country, I avail myself of this occasion to express the deep and heartfelt gratitude with which a testimonial of such distinguished favor has been received. To be elected under the circumstances which have marked the recent contest of opinion, to administer the affairs of a government deriving all its powers from the will of the people—a government whose vital principle is the right of the people to control its measures, and whose only object and glory are the equal happiness and freedom of all the members of the confederacy, cannot but penetrate me with the most powerful and mingled emotions of thanks, on the one hand, for the honor conferred on me, and on the other, of solemn apprehensions for the safety of the great and important interests committed to my charge.

Under the weight of these emotions, unaided by any confidence inspired by past experience, or by any strength derived from the conscious possession of powers equal to the station,—I confess, fellow citizens, that I approach it with trembling reluctance. But my country has willed it, and I obey, gathering hope from the reflection that the other branches of the Government with whom the constitutional will associates me, will yield those resources of Patriotism and intelligence by which the administration may be rendered useful, and the honor and

¹J. Hamilton, Jr., to Van Buren, March 5, 1829, Van Buren Mss.

independence of our widely extended republic guarded from encroachment; but above all, trusting to the smiles of that overruling providence, "in the hollow of whose hand," is the destiny of nations, for that animation of common council and harmonising effort, which shall enable us to steer the Bark of liberty through every difficulty.

In the present stage of our history, it will not be expected of me on this occasion to enter into any detail of the first principles of our government. The achievements of our fathers, our subsequent intercourse with each other, the various relations we have sustained with the other powers of the world, and our present attitude at home, exhibits the practical operations of these principles, all of which are comprised in the sovereignty of the people. This is the basis of our system, and to its security from violation and innovation must our practice and experience as a government be dedicated. To the administration of my illustrious predecessors, I will be permitted to refer as mirrors, not so much for the measures which may be demanded by the present state of the country, but as applications of the same principles to the various exigencies which have occurred in our history, and as shedding light upon those which may hereafter arise. It is thus the great moral race we are running, connects us with the past, and is tributary to the events which are to come: thus, that every period of our government is useful to that which follows, not as a source of principle, but as guides on that sacred fountain to which we must often go for the refreshment of our laws, and the invigoration of the public morals. It is from this source that we derive the means of congratulating ourselves upon the present free condition of our country, and build our hopes for its future safety. In fine, Fellow Citizens, this is the bulwark of our liberties.

Among the various and important duties that are confided to the President, there are none of more interest than that which requires the selection of his officers. The application of the laws, and the management of our relations with foreign powers, form the chief object of an Executive, and are as essential to the welfare of the union as the laws themselves. In the discharge of this trust it shall be my care to fill the various offices at the dis-

posal of the Executive with individuals uniting as far as possible the qualifications of the head and heart, always recollecting that in a free government the demand for moral qualities should be made superior to that of talents. In other forms of government where the people are not regarded as composing the sovereign power, it is easy to perceive that the safeguard of the empire consists chiefly in the skill by which the monarch can wield the bigoted acquiescence of his Subjects. But it is different with us. Here the will of the people, prescribed in a constitution of their own choice controuls the service of the public functionaries, and is interested more deeply in the preservation of those qualities which ensures fidelity and honest devotion to their interests.

Provisions for the national defense form another class of duties for the Representatives of the people, and as they stand in delicate connection with the powers of the general and State Governments when understood to embrace the protection of our own labour, merit the most serious consideration. Legislation for this object encouraging the production of those articles which are essential in the emergencies of war, and to the independence of the nation, seems to me to be sanctioned by the constitution as lawful and Just. The general safety was the great motive for the confederation of the States, and never would have been effected without conferring on the Federal Government the power to provide those internal supplies which constitute the means of war, and which if left to the ordinary operations of commerce, might be withheld at a time when we most needed them. A Judicious Tariff imposing duties high enough to insure us against this calamity will always meet with my hearty coöperation. But beyond this point, legislation effecting the natural relation of the labour of the States are irreconcilable to the objects of the union, and threatening to its peace and tranquility.

Recollecting that all the States are equal in sovereignty, and in claims to the benefits accruing from the confederation, upon the federal principle of providing by taxation for the wants of the Government, it seems Just that the expenditures should be distributed regard being first paid to the national debt, and the appropriations for the support of the Government, and safety

of the union. The necessity of conforming more closely to this principle is illustrated by the dissatisfaction which the expenditures for the purposes of improvement has already created in several of the States. The operation of the principles, as fixed on this equitable basis, will give to the States the fiscal prosperity of the nation, and secure harmony by removing the grounds of jealousy.

Between the powers granted to the general government, and those reserved to the States and the people, it is to be regretted that no line can be so obviously drawn as that all shall understand its boundaries. There will be a territory between them, which must be governed by the good sense of a nation always ready to resist oppression, and too high minded to forget the rights of the minority. It is the inheritance of that sentiment of conciliation, and spirit of compromise which gave us the constitution, and which is to enable us in the progress of time to amend such defects in the system as experience may detect. Fully sensible of the necessity which I shall have for the exercise of this spirit on the part of my fellow citizens, I shall notice with pleasure an unreserved examination of the measures of my administration, and shall be the last to cry out treason against those who interpret differently from myself the policy, or powers of the government.

Some of the Topics which shall engage my earliest attention as intimately connected with the prosperity of our beloved country, are, the liquidation of the national debt, the introduction and observance of the strictest economy in the disbursements of the Government, a Judicious tariff, combined with a fostering care of commerce and agriculture, and regulated by the principles before adverted to, a Just respect for State rights and the maintainence of State sovereignty as the best check of the tendencies to consolidation; and the distribution of the surplus revenue amongst the States according to the apportionment of representation, for the purposes of education and internal improvement, except where the subjects are entirely national. With the accomplishment of these objects I trust the memorials of our national blessings may be multiplied, and the scenes of domestic labour be made more animating and happy.

Among Jackson's papers there is also a manuscript endorsed in his own hands, "Inaugural Address as 'Delivered.'" It is in the hand of a copyist and on a peculiar large sheet of foolscap like that of the "Rough Draft." A third copy also is found in the same collection, tied together with ribbon, written on one side of an ordinary sheet, and evidently that from which Jackson read. Now the interest of this is that the three copies are all different. They seem to represent three stages in the preparation of the document. The "rough draft" was Jackson's own, the second copy, or the "address as delivered," was the result of consultation with his friends at the "Hermitage," and the third copy, or the copy with the ribbon, was that which survived after it was inspected by his friends in Washington, and from which he actually read. It is like the copy in *The Messages and Papers of the President*.

The second copy, much unlike the first, differed from the third in several respects, the most important being that where the seventh paragraph of the printed address, the third copy, deals with internal improvements it merely says that they and the diffusion of knowledge are important and should be encouraged. The second copy, evidently the one brought from Tennessee with the intention of delivering it, gives this paragraph and adds the following:

After liquidating the national debt, the national income will probably exceed the ordinary expenses of government, in which event, the apportionment of the surplus revenue among the states according to the ratio of their representation for these purposes, will be a fair, federal, and a useful disposition of it. Every member of the Union, in peace and in war, will be benefitted by the improvement of our inland navigation, and the construction of highways in the several states. And the Representative principle, upon the virtue of which our state and federal governments are founded, can reach its *maximum* value, only by a wide and efficacious diffusion of instruction — knowledge and power being in this respect coexistent qualities.

It is not too much to suppose that this paragraph was cut out after his arrival in Washington. The tenth paragraph of the third draft must have been added in the capital, since it does not appear in the second copy. It relates to the reform of the patronage. There is in none of the copies an allusion to the United States Bank, which is remarkable, since Jackson five years later made a contradictory statement in reply to a question from Polk. He said:

The President with his respects replies to Colonel Polk, that he understood him correctly, that the original draft of his inaugural address was made at the Hermitage, that his views of the *United States Bank* were incorporated in it, and also his views of the surplus funds that might casually arise in the treasury. These two paragraphs were by the advice of his friends here, both left out of the inaugural address, and were both introduced into his next annual message. It was thought that both these topics were better suited to an annual message, than an inaugural address, and thus you, if necessary, may use it. Every one that knows me, does know, that I have been always opposed to the U. States Bank, nay all Banks.¹

Unless there was a copy of the address which is not preserved, we must conclude that Jackson's memory played him a trick in regard to the bank matter. Washington gossip in 1831 said his memory was bad.²

The address delivered is easily accessible to the reader. It contained the usual expression of respect for the presidency, and promised to protect the rights of the states, to practise economy, and to try to pay the national debt. It gave a cautious approval to a tariff which would "equally favor" agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, except that special encouragement should be given to the production of articles "essential to our

¹See Polk to Jackson, December 23, 1833, Polk Papers, Library of Congress. On the back of this letter Jackson writes the above.

²Mrs. M. B. Smith, *First Forty Years of Washington Society* (Hunt, Editor), 320.

national independence." It pronounced internal improvements and the diffusion of knowledge "of high importance"; it promised not to increase the army, but to keep it and the navy at their existing state of efficiency; and it praised a patriotic and well organized militia as an "impenetrable ægis" which in spite of imperfections would protect us from foreign foes. It announced a just and liberal policy toward the Indians, undertook to reform abuses of the patronage, and closed by invoking Divine assistance for all his efforts. It was, as Hamilton, of South Carolina, said, a satisfactory address, dignified enough and not likely to arouse the opposition of any important section of public opinion.¹

The impression was general at the time that Jackson did not write the address. Adams thought it was by Henry Lee, and Col. J. A. Hamilton says he had much to do with it in Washington. This impression was connected with the feeling that Jackson could not write such a paper as appeared in print. But his opponents were apt to underestimate his ability. The rough draft, or first copy, which has survived and was undoubtedly his own work, indicates that he could write a very good paper. The changes subsequently made by the advice of his friends were made for reasons of political expediency.

The first weeks of the administration were full of doubts. The persistence and crude manners of the office-seekers filling the hotels and public buildings seemed to show a deterioration in public life. Persons who did not get a cabinet position did not conceal their disappointment; and less interested observers began to shake their heads, while the Adams-Clay opposition gleefully declared that the victors were discredited in the very beginning. No man then in the administration could check this tendency to confusion, Jackson least of all, whose daily companions were Eaton and Lewis, themselves leaders of the forces

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 436.

of devastation. So great was the danger that even R. M. Johnson, of Kentucky, on his way home, wrote to urge the President to dismiss his unofficial advisers, adding that people said Jackson needed no organized committee to sustain him or enlighten his councils.¹ From this situation, Van Buren's quiet dexterity probably saved the government. He alone of the cabinet had the confidence of the older politicians, he alone could remove from administration circles the appearance of social crudeness, and he alone had the address to bind up the wounds of disappointed leaders, satisfying them with some of the higher diplomatic positions not yet assigned.

Van Buren left Albany for Washington late in March. In New York he met Levi Woodbury, of New Hampshire, who had been urged in vain for cabinet position as the representative of New England. He was disappointed and talked freely about affairs at the capital. At Philadelphia, the traveler encountered Edward Livingston, who had no cause for dissatisfaction; for he was first offered a seat in the cabinet and refusing that was offered the ministry to France, of all places the one he most wanted. Yet Livingston and his wife were full of forebodings, complaining especially of the lack of social dignity in the White House. They could not foresee, said Van Buren, that Jackson's receptions would eventually become as elaborate, brilliant, and popular as those of any of his predecessors. Continuing his journey the secretary met at New Castle, Del., the disappointed McLane, from whom came the same doleful tale. From Washington came the same story in a large number of letters from personal admirers who did not like the looks of things, and some of whom advised him not to become secretary of state.

Van Buren reached Washington in the evening. His carriage was hardly at the hotel before he was surrounded by candidates for office. They followed him to his room, where he lay on a sofa

¹Johnson to Jackson, March 9, 1829, Jackson MSS.

and said he would call on the President in an hour but would hear their claims in the interim. At last he set out for the White House, and his own account of his reception gives us an excellent picture of the lonely occupant of the mansion. He says:

A solitary lamp in the vestibule and a single candle in the President's office gave no promise of the cordiality with which I was, notwithstanding, greeted by Genl. Jackson on my visit to the White House. I found no one with him except his intimate friend, Major Lewis. His health was poor, and his spirits depressed as well by his recent bereavement of his wife, as by the trials of personal and political friendship which he had been obliged to encounter in the organization of his cabinet. This was our first meeting as political friends, and it was certainly a peculiar feature of that interview and no insignificant illustration of his nature that he received with most affectionate eagerness at the very threshold of his administration the individual destined to occupy the first place in his confidence, of whose character his only opportunities to learn anything by personal observation had been presented during periods of active political hostility. He soon noticed my exhaustion from sickness and travel and, considerably postponing all business to an appointed hour next day, recommended me to my bed. From that night to the day of his death, relations, sometimes official, always political and personal, were inviolably maintained between that noble old man and myself, the cordial and confidential character of which can never have been surpassed among public men.¹

Van Buren does not overstate the matter. The two men first met, but in a purely formal manner, in the winter of 1815-1816. They next saw one another when the elder became senator from Tennessee in 1823. They discovered then that they agreed in principles but were opposed in personal feelings. In 1819 Jackson visited New York and gave a toast at a Tammany dinner in honor of Clinton. He was largely prompted to this by his dis-

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, I., 11-15, Van Buren Mss.

like of Crawford, whom Clinton opposed; but the affair offended Van Buren, Crawford leader in the state. After Jackson retired from the senate in 1825, no communication passed between him and the New Yorker, except one letter introducing a friend and one or two others of a formal nature.¹ The interview at Washington was, therefore, literally the beginning of the intimacy of the two men. Van Buren intimates that the relation developed rapidly, that it sprang out of Jackson's spontaneous feeling and was returned at once by its object. The statement may well be true. Affliction left him isolated; he was too strong by nature to be satisfied with the political wisdom of men like Lewis and Eaton and turned to the ready sense of the secretary of state. He found in him a certainty of purpose and judgment which relieved his own inexperience while it satisfied the friends of the administration.

The first business between the two men referred to diplomatic appointments. Jackson admitted that he had made a mistake in offering Tazewell the mission to England and Livingston that to France. Van Buren as frankly replied that if he had been consulted, he would not have made the offers. Each position involved much work on incomplete diplomatic business and young men, he thought, ought to be sent to fill them. Since the offers were made it was believed that nothing could be done to withdraw them, but it was decided to urge each to hasten his departure, a course which solved the difficulty; for when Tazewell and Livingston found they were expected to set out at once they both declined. At this interview Jackson asked the secretary to suggest a minister to Spain. The latter mentioned the name of Woodbury, and the President, willing to conciliate New England, adopted the suggestion. But Woodbury, after much hesitation, also declined.

When Tazewell declined, Berrien, the new attorney-general,

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, I., 16-71

was suggested for the English mission; and Jackson, pleased with the idea, made the offer.¹ It was considered certain that the tender would be accepted; and Van Buren seized the opportunity to satisfy the federalists and the disappointed South Carolinians by offering the attorney-generalship to McLane, who gladly assented. But here, much to the surprise of all, Berrien announced that he would remain in the cabinet, and McLane, his pride somewhat hurt, consented to go to England. It was arranged, however, that if there should be a vacancy on the supreme court bench McLane should be recalled to take it. He was a man of ability, but possessed of an unsteady ambition which was destined to limit his ultimate success.² His wife was a brilliant social leader in the capital, and it was supposed that his eagerness to enter the cabinet was partly due to her influence.

When Livingston refused the mission to France on account of the condition of his private affairs, Van Buren saw in it an opportunity to soothe Virginia. He selected for the place, W. C. Rives, who accepted. He was of the younger school of his state's leaders and filled Van Buren's ideal, that to endure the rebuffs of the French ministry and persistently follow until they would settle our claims, it was necessary to have an agent in Paris who had a career to make, not one who would feel disposed to rest on his laurels rather than subject his dignity to the slights of an indifferent government. The appointment justified this expectation. Rives took up the task required of him with assiduity and by his insistence forced the French ministry to come to an agreement as to our claims, although it took the threats of Jackson at a later day to make them actually pay over the money.³

Having thus smoothed out the political situation, Van Buren turned to the condition of official society, which was much

¹Lyttleton Tazewell to Jackson, March 20, 1829; Jackson MSS.

²Van Buren, *Autobiography*, I., 47-56. Van Buren MSS.

³See below, Chapter XXX.

disturbed by the lack of prestige on the part of the Tennessee group. He says that when a senator he came, "as a brother Dutchman" into close friendship with Baron Huygens, minister from Holland, and with Sir Charles Vaughn, the English minister. Relying on these to help him, he invited all the diplomatic corps to meet him at the White House to be presented to the President. He then told Jackson that in an informal interview these two diplomats had expressed the opinion that if, in the coming presentation, the assurances of the inaugural address were repeated it would enable the ministers to make such reports as would have good effect at home. The secretary, therefore, advised the President not to make a formal address but to say that he stood by the inaugural, that he desired peace with all the world, that he had no prejudices nor predilections among foreign nations, and that he should try to advance his own nation through unselfish and frank negotiations. The reader will observe that these suggestions went further than the inaugural; but Jackson followed them, delivering himself, as Van Buren says, in his "invariably happy and expressive manner." The diplomats were well pleased. A short time afterward, they were invited to a dinner which was served in a creditable manner and at which "the simple yet kindly, old fashioned manners of the host" surprised and captivated the guests. And thus, says our informant, the anxiety of these foreign gentlemen was relieved and their prejudices softened "by the most approved diplomatic machinery."¹ Moreover, when it was known in Washington that the diplomats were pleased, popular apprehensions were lessened. Thus the first weeks of the administration passed without calamity and with some degree of success.

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, I., 68-70, Van Buren Mss.

CHAPTER XXI

JACKSON'S APPOINTMENTS TO OFFICE

THE power the President gets from appointing the administrative officials puts a severe test on his judgment. Neither the constitution nor the laws provided any other means of determining the capacity of the appointee than the will of the appointer; but as party developed the choice became less a spontaneous act of the President and more an expression of partisan feeling.

Under Jackson the political party achieved a new stage in its development. It took a more popular basis and evolved the nominating convention as a means of expressing its will in one important phase of its activity. The party thus gained in self-expression. It took greater control over its leaders and forced them to follow in some degree its wishes in making appointments. This process is seen in Monroe's administration; it was resisted by Adams with results unfavorable to his popularity; it found its full opportunity under Jackson. The last-mentioned President did not create the spoils system: it came with new conditions. His responsibility was that he did not oppose but approved it through his sympathy with the new party ideals.

It is difficult to determine on what principle the early Presidents arrived at their estimate of an applicant's fitness for office. The recommendation of friends probably had much weight and party lines were usually followed. Thus, Washington in the beginning of his administration selected most of his subordinates from persons who had favored the adoption of the constitution. In Rhode Island and North Carolina, the two states which entered the union after it was formed, the customs officers

were anti-federalists in accord with prevailing state politics. Washington appointed the large majority of their successors from the federalists.¹ If it should be said in extenuation that he believed the union would be safe only in the hands of officers loyal to its establishment, it would be pertinent to say in reply that this is the ordinary justification of party appointments.

When Jefferson became President he found the offices full of federalists. He proposed to appoint republicans until they equaled their opponents, but with the disappearance of the federalist party all the civil service was filled with republicans. With a design of building up his own support, Monroe announced what he called an "amalgamation policy," selecting officers from both sides. This displeased those who believed themselves the genuine representatives of republicanism. Later these were mostly Crawfordites and carried their feeling for party appointments into the larger Jackson party which was formed after the election of 1824. Partisanship, therefore, was never quite absent from the choice of officials before 1829.

On the other hand, personal favor and various other reasons than fitness for the office decided the selection within party lines. Sometimes women in Washington sought office for their friends: for some applicants poverty, or a large family, or kinship with a man of prominence, or the favor of an ex-President were made grounds for appointment. A letter from Monroe to Jackson, 1821, in regard to the new officials selected for Florida has this interesting statement:

Mr. Alexander Scott, of Maryland, is appointed to the Collector of the Customs, Mr. Steuben Smith, of New York, Naval officer, Mr. Hackley, of Virginia, Surveyor, and Mr. Baker, of this place, Inspector of Pensacola. The first mentioned is a man of considerable literary acquirements and strict integrity, well connected in his State. The second is the son of Col. Wm.

¹Fish, *The Civil Service and Patronage*, 11-13.

Smith, who was Aide-de-camp to General Washington in the revolutionary war, and afterwards Secretary of Legation at London, where he married the daughter of Mr. Adams, former President. He is the nephew of the present Secretary of State, and his wife is the sister of Mr. Adams. Of Mr. Hackley you may have heard in Spain, his wife is the sister of Governor Randolph of Virginia, and Mr. Madison and others, our friends, have strongly recommended him to me. As these persons are, I believe, literally poor, as is indeed, Mr. Baker, who was formerly consul in Spain and Italy, and in whose favor Mr. Jefferson takes an interest, I wish you to place them, if possible, in some of the public buildings, of which I presume there are some not necessary for your own accommodation. It is I believe customary for the revenue officers to be thus provided, wherever it is practicable, and in no instances can such provision be more important, or indispensable to the parties than the present.¹

Monroe does not avow personal reasons for the choice of all the officials in Florida, but the frank reference to them here seems to indicate that such reasons were not unusual in his mind. The idea is supported in the following extract from a letter by Mrs. Margaret Bayard Smith:

I have tried and other friends have tried, to procure a clerkship for him.² Mrs. Porter did her best and I used all manner of persuasion and argument with the kind, good natured secty. of War.—“My dear Madam, what am I to do? When we ask Congress for more Clerks in the Dept and tell them the present number is insufficient for the duties of the offices, the reply is, If you continue to fill the offices with *old men*, no number will be sufficient. Get young men and fewer will answer and the work be better done. This is too true, the public benefit is sacrificed to private interest and charity. The Departments are literally overstocked with old, inefficient clerks. I cannot serve your friend, consistently with duty.”³

¹Monroe, *Writings*, VI., 183.

²The reference is to a relative of her husband. Rush was secretary of war.

³*First Forty Years of Washington Society* (Hunt, Editor), 276.

In another connection Rush spoke of the war department as the "octogenarian department."¹

The old method of appointment made possible, and by this evidence it actually created, inefficiency in office. Jefferson made many removals which were really political, but he usually managed to find some other reason to justify his action.² The party once established in power, removals were infrequent; political reasons ceased to act; and it was so hard to prove a charge of inefficiency that it was rarely attempted. Moreover, there was a prevalent notion that office was properly a safe refuge for deserving old men who had served the public. These difficulties gave a strong reason for passing the Four Years' Law of 1820. Crawford probably wrote the bill, and he undoubtedly supported it. For tenure during good behavior of a large number of officers who handled the revenues, chiefly in the treasury department, was now substituted a four years' term. By leaving incumbents subject to reappointment the secretary was able to control their action, if he chose to do so.³ It is possible that Crawford favored the law for its bearing on his coming canvass for the presidency, but it is not clear that he did so; for the chief support of the theory is the diary of John Quincy Adams, not always reliable when dealing with one of the diarists' political rivals. Apart from any such purpose, the bill made removals of inefficient easy, but it applied to only a portion of the officials.

The overthrow of the caucus, like everything else that gave the political party a more popular basis, tended to the spoils system. Under the caucus the member of congress had a feeling of proprietorship in the offices. He freely asked for them for himself and for his friends. Under the later system he lost his controlling influence with the appointing power and with the growth of democracy looked more carefully to the will of his

¹Colton, *Private Correspondence of Clay*, 188.

²Fish, *The Civil Service and Patronage*, 42.

³*Ibid.*, 66-70.

constituents. That will was now embodied in the demands of political lieutenants and supporting editors, the persons who are ever at the bottom of demands for party rewards. They were the class that supplied the office-seekers: they felt that reward for loyal service was theirs by right.

The conviction that the public service suffered from favoritism and inefficiency and the growth of democratic party organization were two reasons for the development of the spoils system. A third was the belief in rotation in office. Long terms seemed to favor the creation of an official aristocracy and to produce an official class who were indifferent to popular approval. More than all else, party lieutenants believed that the rewards of party fidelity ought to be distributed among the workers with approximate equality. When the system was logically developed, rotation in office would apply within party lines as well as without.

Partisan appointments have long existed in English-speaking countries. They were used in the colonies to support the crown influence, and after the revolution many states saw them adopted to support party power. But they took their earliest and most complete development in New York, where the people from an early period were used to little local self-government. A large number of militia and civil offices were appointive — in 1821 there were over 8000 of the former and 6,663 of the latter — and the first state constitution created a council of appointment, consisting of four members and the governor, who were to fill this large number of places. From 1777 to 1795 and from 1801 to 1804 George Clinton was governor, and his own rule was merged so completely and quietly into that of his nephew, De Witt Clinton, that it may be said to have persisted till the death of the latter in 1828. These two men built up by skilful management of the appointments a devoted party, in most respects like the modern political "machine." Their example was imitated by others; and although in 1821 the number of appointive offices was greatly

reduced and the council of appointment abolished, the spoils system remained a firm characteristic of party life. To control the many political subordinates and to direct them efficiently in the elections there now came into existence a small central group of party leaders called the "Albany Regency," at the head of which, in the period of which we are speaking, was Martin Van Buren.¹

New York was not alone in the development of partisan appointments. Pennsylvania has been pronounced as bad, and the evil was not unknown in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. The aristocratic caste of Southern society was not favorable to rotation in office, but in the West, which was dedicated to social equality, rotation was demanded as necessary to democracy, and politicians there were alive to the opportunity of turning it toward an effective system of party appointments.²

Thus we see that by 1824 the spoils system was established in many of the states and was in fair way to be adopted in the national government, had not President Adams intervened. He would lend himself in no manner to the introduction of the system. His appointments took no partisan nature, nor would he remove an official because he took part in politics. He was so rigid that he won the disapproval of not only his more selfish followers but his most intelligent and liberal supporters. Edward Everett, a fair representative of the latter class, declared in 1828:

We both probably know cases — I certainly do — of incumbents, who have actually become hostile, on the calculation that they are safe now, and can make themselves so, in the contingency of a change. For an Administration then to bestow its patronage, without distinction of party, is to court its own de-

¹Fish, *The Civil Service and Patronage*, 86-91.

²*Ibid.*, 92-103.

struction. I think, therefore, that Fidelity to itself requires, that every Administration should have the benefit of the cordial coöperation of all its members. It cannot be supposed, considering how nearly equal the parties are in numbers, that there are not good men, for any and every service, on the side of the Administration. And tho' I would apply the general rule, with the greatest possible lenity, in the individual case, yet the rule ought to be, that, other things being equal, the friends of the Administration sh'd have the preference. Our present chief magistrate made the experiment of the higher principle, of exclusive regard to merit; and what has been his reward? A most furious opposition, rallied on the charge of the corrupt distribution of office, and the open or secret hostility of three-fourths of the office-holders in the Union.'

Everett's sense of the drift of political opinion was correct. The country was turning toward a new doctrine, and Adams's attempt to hold it back was futile.

It was well known during the campaign that Jackson would favor partisan appointments. His strong and oft repeated charge that the offices were filled with inefficient and corrupt men was but laying a basis for removals. Leading Jackson papers said he would, if elected, remove all who deserved it. General Harrison was heard to say he would not support him if he did not believe Jackson would, the day he arrived at Washington and without the formality of a trial, hand up every rascal of them.' So strong was the expectation among the followers of the general that Everett thought Jackson could not be elected if he were now to avow the sentiments in the Monroe letter of 1816.'

It is too much to expect absolute consistency of a statesman. In 1798 Jackson characterized a proposition to fill the offices

¹Everett to John McLean, August 1, 1828, *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, February 1908, 361.

²*Ibid* to *Ibid*, August 18, 1828, *Ibid*, 372.

³*Ibid*, 376.

with federalists as an "insolent attack" on liberty.¹ He probably merely expressed a temporary feeling of resentment against his opponents; for when later in the same year he resigned his seat in the senate to become judge, his new appointment and that of his successor were made strictly on party lines, and without objection on his part.² The apparent liberality in the Monroe letter, 1816, may be explained on the ground of his strong military feeling. He was chiefly concerned that federalists who fought in the war should be considered in the appointments, and we must not forget that to Lewis's embellishing hand we owe some of the strongest expressions in the letter.

As a soldier he would be pleased to lessen party spirit which would prevent a national coöperation in resenting the foreign wrongs. It was a worthy ideal, but it did not deny the feeling that offices should be given to gentlemen who deserved to be taken care of for past services. He was disappointed when, as governor of Florida, he was not allowed to fill the subordinate offices there with friends and old military associates. In 1818 he recommended to Monroe the wishes of an old revolutionary soldier in words which explain his view at that time better than any words of the historian. He wrote:

Colonel Sherburne, Chickasaw agent, requested me to name to you that he was wearied with his situation, of which I have no doubt; his age and former habits of life but little calculated him for happiness amidst a savage nation. But being dependent for the support of himself and sister on the perquisites of his office, he can not resign; but it would be a great accommodation to him to be transferred to Newport, should a vacancy in any office occur that he was competent to fill. I have no doubt but he is an aimable old man; and from his revolutionary services, I sincerely feel for him. He is unacquainted with Indians,

¹Jackson to Overton, January 22, 1798, a copy in the Library of Congress, original in Nashville, Tennessee.

²Willie Blount to Sevier, July 6 and August 12, 1798, *American Historical Magazine* (Nashville), V., 121-123.

and all business which relates to them; but at the treaty, as soon as he did understand our wishes and that of the government, he aided us with all his might. The colonel never can be happy amidst the Indians. It would afford me great pleasure to hear that the colonel was comfortably seated in an office in Newport, where he could spend his declining years in peace and happiness with his own countrymen and friends.¹

One who could write thus in 1818 could not, consistently, criticise the administration ten years later for having the service full of old and inefficient men.

So much was said about the abuse of the patronage during the campaign of 1828 that Jackson himself came to believe it and heard of election results with a grim determination to make changes. "I know the General is resolved," wrote Major Lewis, "on making a pretty general sweep of the departments. It is expected he will cleanse the Augean stables, and I feel pretty confident he will not disappoint the popular expectation in this particular. He is determined on making a radical change in the offices — on giving them a complete overhauling; and to do this effectually an almost entire new set must be put in." Lewis was then at Jackson's elbow and must have known his superior's private feeling in the matter. His opinion, also, is corroborated by J. A. Hamilton, who wrote Van Buren to the same purport on February 27.² And yet a clean sweep was not made. Some hand, it may have been Van Buren's,³ intervened to secure moderation. A great many more removals, however, were made than at the beginning of any preceding administration, and this, with the prevalent apprehensive terror made the period remembered as a debauch of partisanship, a characterization it hardly deserves.

¹See Parton, *Life of Jackson*, II., 526.

²Lewis to J. A. Hamilton, December 12, 1828; Hamilton to Van Buren, February 27, 1829; Van Buren MSS. Also Jackson to Van Buren, March 31, 1829, Jackson MSS.

³Van Buren to Jackson, enclosing letter from Ritchie, March 31, 1829; Jackson MSS.

For the distress of the ejected Jackson had warmest sympathy. "My feelings have been severely crowded by the various applications for relief," he wrote ten weeks after the inauguration, ". . . Would you believe it, that a lady who had once rolled in wealth, but whose husband was overtaken by misfortune and reduced to want, and is, and has been an applicant for office, and well recommended, applied to me with tears in her eyes, soliciting relief, assuring me that her children were starving, and to buy them a morsel of bread she had to sell her thimble the day before. An office I had not to give her, and my cash was nearly out, but I could not withhold from her half of the pittance I had with me."¹

Much was said by the Jackson men before election about the corruption of the office-holders. They entered office themselves with the desire and expectation of finding much fraud. But search as they might, they could find only one wrong-doer, Tobias Watkins, fourth auditor. He was short in his accounts, and was indicted and sentenced to imprisonment. Jackson ordered a label to be displayed over the door of the unhappy man's prison cell announcing that it led to the "Criminal Apartment."²

During the first weeks of the administration Washington was filled with gloomy tales of suffering among office-holders and office-seekers. Those who were in office trembled for their futures: those who sought positions displayed the most distressed conditions as a means of recommending themselves to the sympathy of the appointing power. Wherever one went were signs of woe. "We have not had leisure yet," said Jackson on May 26th, "to make the necessary arrangements of reform. We are progressing, and such is the press for office, and the distress here, that there are for the place of messengers (for the Departments)

¹Jackson to Cryer, May 26, 1829, *American Historical Magazine* (Nashville), IV., 231.

²Sumner, *Life of Jackson*, (revised edition), 189.

at least twenty applicants for each station, and many applicants who have been men of wealth and respectability. Still if our friend Gwinn wishes to come on here, when we finally organize the Departments, and turn out the spies from our camp, I will preserve an office for him. But we are now having a thorough investigation into the situation of all Departments, and the inquiry will be made how many, if any, clerks can be dispensed with."

The clamor of the public did not deter Jackson, who wrote in his private journal some time between May 18 and June 23, 1829:

There has been a great noise made about removals. This to be brought before Congress with the causes, with the propriety of passing a law vacating all offices periodically — then the good can be re-appointed, and the bad, defaulters, left out without murmurs. Now, every man who has been in office a few years, believes he has a life estate in it, a vested right, and if it has been held twenty years or upwards, not only a vested right, but that it ought to descend to his children, and if no children then the next of kin. This is not the principles of our government. It is rotation in office that will perpetuate our liberty.

There can be no doubt that he acted from what he believed to be the best interests of the public, and our condemnation must fall on his capacity of forming a correct decision, rather than on his intention. A letter to Mrs. Pope, wife of a prominent Frankfort, Kentucky, supporter, who intervened to secure the retention of a postmaster, shows how rigorously he appreciated his duty. It also may help to show that the situation was less severe than has been supposed. He wrote:

Your letter of the 30th ultimo has been received, and I embrace the first leisure moment since, to explain to you the reasons which produced the removal of Mr. H — Acting upon the information contained in your first letter on the subject,

I felt a pleasure in the supposition that he could be retained without violating a proper regard for the duties of my office, or for the opinion of the great body of the people interested in that which he filled. This pleasure I assure you, Madam, was heightened by the respect which I entertained for your wishes; and it was not without much pain that I felt constrained to act upon the belief that you had mistaken his true character. Unquestioned authority has been lodged in the department of the Postmaster General for the assertion that Mr. H—— intemperate¹ habits disqualify him, in a great degree, for the personal discharge of the duties of the office, and that he had been in the custom from this cause, of entrusting its keys to individuals obnoxious to the community in many points of view. An extract of the memorial on this subject I enclose for your satisfaction. . . . It is a painful duty to be the instrument of lessening the resources of a family so amiable as that of Mr. H—— but when the public good calls for it, it must be performed. As a private individual, it would give me the greatest happiness to alleviate their distress, but as a public officer, I cannot devote to this object the interests of the country.²

When he came into office Jackson found that many officials were insolvent and deeply in debt. It revolted his honest soul, and he directed all such persons to be dismissed. He would not have the government service a refuge for such defrauders. He ordered a search of the jail records, which showed that eighty-eight persons were thus delinquent. Some of them had taken the bankrupts' oath twelve times in a few months.³

A story preserved among his friends tell show his love of honesty once brought to pay debts long ignored, a man over whom he had no official authority. The keeper of a boarding-house in the capital had for lodger a congressman who evaded his obligations to her. At length she saw no other hope than to

¹The word "intemperate" is erased in the text.

²Jackson to Mrs. F. Pope, June 8, 1829, Jackson MSS.

³From an undated memorandum in Jackson's hand. It undoubtedly refers to the beginning of his administration. Jackson MSS.

take the matter to Jackson, who heard her story and said, "Have him give you a note for the amount due and bring the paper to me." The delinquent readily gave his note, for it was worth nothing. When Jackson received it he endorsed it and gave it to the woman with the remark, "I think he will pay it now." The expectation was a just one: no member of congress was willing to lose his hold on presidential favor by forcing the chief executive to pay his board bill, or to have his constituents know that he threw his money obligations on the shoulders of the hero of New Orleans.

The prospect of wholesale removals brought protests from some of the prominent men in the party. They feared the influence on public opinion, and one of them used the sagacious argument that it would be better to keep the applicants unsatisfied, saying, "The hope of office will secure you more support than the enjoyment of it."¹ Jackson endorsed the letter to be kept carefully and filed it among his special papers. The appointment of editors brought the loudest protest. A partisan editor of the day was apt to be a hired hack-writer for whom his own employers had little respect. He was rewarded with contracts to print the laws and with other government publishing, but he was not expected to have office. In the democratic upheaval which brought Jackson to power this specious distinction tended to disappear. Editors worked as hard in the canvass as political speakers and asked for the same rewards. Jackson complied with their requests, showing his favor for the profession by appointing Amos Kendall, a Kentucky editor, an auditor in the treasury department and taking him for one of his confidential advisers. The objection to such appointments was strongest with the Virginians, long attached to the traditions of official propriety. Their disappointment reached the President through several sources, most notably in a letter from Ritchie to Van

¹John Pope to Jackson, February 19, 1829, Jackson MSS.

Buren.¹ But the protests did not change his attitude. He believed he was right, and he justified himself in a long letter from which the following is an extract:

You will recollect that in the recent political contest it was said, and truly said, to be a struggle between the virtue of the American people and the corrupting influence of executive patronage. By no act, by no solicitation of mine, and apart from any interference of myself, did the people in their kindness, present me as their candidate. The different presses of the country acting upon their own impulses, espoused one side or the other, as judgment or other cause operated. Those who stepped forward and advocated the question termed the side of the people, were a part of the people, and differing only in this that they were the proprietors and conductors of the press — in many cases purchased by themselves expressly for the purpose of aiding in the "grand cause." And to what motive other than the love of country and the exercise of a sound judgment could their course be ascribed? I was not abroad seeking popularity, nor did I trammel or commit myself by pledges to remove partisans in the event of success. No one has ever accused me of doing so, and hence we are bound to believe that they were disinterested in their support of me. Many maintained and believed, and especially the politicians of the country, that no efforts of the people, would be found sufficient to counteract the subsidizing influence of government. Upon this ground then, whatever motive could arise founded on self, was of a character to invite chiming in with the powers that were then in existence. Yet many editors did not, and hence can we resist the impression that they were actuated by the same generous and patriotic impulse that the people were?

If these suggestions be founded in truth, why should this class of citizens be excluded from offices to which others, not more patriotic, nor presenting stronger claims as to qualification may aspire?

¹Van Buren to Jackson, March 31; Jackson to Van Buren, March 31, 1829; Jackson MSS. Ritchie to Van Buren, March 27; W. S. Archer to Van Buren, May 6, 1829; Van Buren MSS. Jackson to J. Randolph, November 11, and J. Randolph to Jackson, November 22, 1829; Jackson MSS.

To establish such a precedent would I apprehend, have a powerful tendency to place the control and management of the press into the hands of those who might be destitute of principle; and who prosecuting their profession only as means of livelihood and lucre, would become mercenary, and to earn their penny would abandon principle, which ought to be their rule of action.

The road to office and preferment, being accessible alike to the rich and the poor, the farmer and the printer, honesty, probity and capacity constituting the sole and exclusive test, will I am persuaded, have the happiest tendency to preserve unimpaired freedom of political action; change it and let it be known that any class or portion of citizens are and ought to be proscribed, and discontent, and dissatisfaction will be engendered. Extend it to editors of papers, and I re-iterate, that men of uncompromising and sterling integrity will no longer be found in the ranks of those who edit our public journals. I submit it then, to your good sense and calm reflection, what must be the inevitable result of things in this country, when the press and its freedom shall become so depressed and degraded as to be found altogether under the control of men wanting in principle and the proper feelings of men?¹

This letter, the draft of which exists in Jackson's own hand, well illustrates his grasp on political matters. The naïveté with which he passes judgment on the motives of the editors measures his manner of estimating his supporters. His indifference to the influence of the dignified classes appears in his readiness to accept the editors as equal advisers and supporters. His belief in the people as the source of political authority and his confidence in his own cause appear in all the phases of the letter. It marks him as an honest, credulous, determined, uninformed, and uncompromising leader of a democratic upheaval, a man who does not hesitate to put into force a new idea through fear of violating established procedure.

Later in his administration he was surrounded by skilled

¹Jackson to Z. L. Miller, May 13, 1829, Jackson MSS.

observers of human nature and they were able to protect him from too ready confidence in impostors; but in his first days this defense was not established, and the effect was sometimes bad. It was notably so in the case of Samuel Swartwout, an adventurer who came seeking any office which might offer. He had facility and assurance, beneath which the credulous President was not able to penetrate. He carried off one of the best prizes in the government, collector of the port of New York. The position controlled the appointment of many subordinates, it involved the handling of much money; and it had an important relation to the merchants of the greatest importing city in the country. Through the custom of taking the bonds of the merchants to secure deferred payments of duties, large discretion was left to the collector; and he ought to be a man of sound business judgment. Measured by any of these needs Swartwout was not a success. He had no experience, he had not the confidence of the business men of the city, he was an inveterate speculator, and he considered office an opportunity to make money. He was well known in New York, and Van Buren opposed his appointment. But Swartwout had won Jackson's confidence and had petitions numerous signed. As some of the New York congressmen were for him and the senators did not work against him, he carried all before him.

In making this appointment Jackson's personal feeling went against the recommendation of every friend who ought to have had influence in the matter. Ingham, in whose department the New York collectorship lay, was against it. Cambreleng, a congressman from the state, wrote: "If our collector is not a defaulter in four years, I'll swallow the treasury, if it was all coined in coppers." The assurance which enabled Swartwout to win Jackson made him a popular official and for a while he

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, 70-82; Cambreleng to Jackson, April 15, Van Buren to Dudley, April 20; *Ibid* to Cambreleng, April 23, 25, and another letter of the same month, but without date to Cambreleng and Bowne—1829; Charles E. Dudley to Van Buren, April 23, 1829; Van Buren Mss.

got on without difficulty. The President was pleased with this and sometimes rallied Van Buren and the New Yorkers at the failure of their forebodings. But beneath this suave exterior the collector was nevertheless a defaulter. His speculations began in nine months after he entered office and continued until when they were discovered in 1838 they amounted to a million and a quarter.¹

Jackson's rage when he heard the news was characteristic. The delinquent, who had fled the country, ought, he wrote, to be captured and thrown into prison. Many times the writer advised him not to speculate while a government official and he always promised to follow the advice. "Can he live after this? or will he cut his own throat?" It must be evident to all that Swartwout could not have defrauded the government without the assistance of the United States Bank, and the event, said Jackson, ought to show the country that there should be a complete divorce between banks and the government.² His allusions to the matter are innocent of self-condemnation.

Swartwout established in New York the Seventh Ward Bank to help in his personal schemes. It was a political institution and relied on government deposits. In 1834 he desired to get a government deposit and appealed directly to Jackson. Post-master-General Barry, he wrote, desired a loan from the bank on account of the post-office department and he was willing to accommodate him if fifty thousand dollars of the funds for building the new custom house were placed in the bank. All this he related in a letter to the President,³ in which was enclosed the following to the secretary of the treasury:

My dear sir: It is so recent that the commission for building the Custom House have received 50,000 Dollars, for that object,

¹Felix Grundy to Jackson, November 13, 1828, Jackson Mss.

²Jackson to Blair, January 5, 1839, Jackson Mss.

³Swartwout to Jackson, March 8 (1834 or 1835), Jackson Mss.

that they do not wish to press the Department for a further loan. Yet I can assure your excellency, that a draft for another sum of 50,000 Dls. would be of great importance to many of our friends who wd. be infinitely benefited by its use in the shape of Loans, who can not get it out of the Depsts. Banks. This I know. While Millions lay in the vaults of these Institutions, many of which are opposed to us in politicks, this little patriotic Institution is working its way among our friends, loaning all it can to our friends and sustaining the administration by all the means in its power. If, therefore, a further sum of 50,000 Dls. could be placed to the credit of the commission we would place it in that institution, and it would be used, I can assure you, for the benefit of the administration and its friends. Your kind interference might do this for us and we should be infinitely obliged thereby.

The application seems to have been successful; but apart from that, it is discreditable to a President of the United States that he was approachable in such a matter; and that he should have preserved the letter without evidence of displeasure at its contents is at least surprising.

Removals under Jackson are believed to have been very numerous; but the available evidence shows that while they were more than under former Presidents, they were not so many as in later administrations. The newness of the system and the vehemence of party feeling have unduly impressed the imagination of the historian. There were then 612 presidential officers, and only 252 were removed. Of more than 8,000 post-masters and their deputies only 600 met a like fate. Deputy post-masters were not presidential officers until 1836, and they had small salaries; so that changes here may be attributed to resignations or the caprice of the immediate superior quite as readily as to the spirit of the administration.'

Nine months after his inauguration Jackson summed up his view of appointments in his first annual message, saying:

¹Fish, *The Civil Service and Patronage*, 124-128.

There are, perhaps, few men who can for any length of time enjoy office and power without being more or less under the influence of feelings unfavorable to the faithful discharge of their political duties. Their integrity may be proof against improper considerations immediately addressed to themselves but they are apt to acquire a habit of looking with indifference upon the public interests and of tolerating conduct from which an unpracticed man would revolt. Office is considered as a species of property, and government rather as a means of promoting individual interests than as an instrument created solely for the service of the people. Corruption in some and in others a perversion of correct feelings and principles divert government from its legitimate ends and make it an engine for the support of the few at the expense of the many. The duties of all public offices are, or at least admit of being made, so plain and simple that men of intelligence may readily qualify themselves for their performance; and I can not but believe that more is lost by the long continuance of men in office than is generally to be gained by their experience. I submit, therefore, to your consideration whether the efficiency of the Government would not be promoted and official industry and integrity better secured by an extension of the law which limits appointments to four years.

In a country where offices are created solely for the benefit of the people no one man has any more intrinsic right to official station than another. Offices were not established to give support to particular men at the public expense. No individual wrong is, therefore, done by removal, since neither appointment to nor continuance in office is matter of right. The incumbent became an officer with a view to public benefits, and when these require his removal they are not to be sacrificed to private interests. It is the people, and they alone, who have a right to complain when a bad officer is substituted for a good one. He who is removed has the same means of obtaining a living that are enjoyed by the millions who never held office.¹

Jackson's extreme democracy made him oblivious to the dangers from partisan appointments. He saw the evils of

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 448.

long terms when incumbents were selected on personal grounds; but he was incapable of understanding how his own system would bring greater inefficiency. His assertion that all men could easily learn to perform the duties of the public offices was palpably false, and experience quickly proved it. There was as much dishonesty among his own appointees as among their predecessors and as much inefficiency. George Bancroft, himself a democrat, who had business to transact with the treasury department in 1831, said: "Talk of reform! The departments are full of the laziest clerks, and men are paid large salaries for neglecting the public business."¹

The permanent effect of this change has often been pointed out. Although it was, as just stated, an out-growth of forces beyond Jackson's control, it received from the capricious nature of many of his selections an exaggerated viciousness which was apparent to his best supporters. Even Marcy, supposed to have had no conscience about bad appointments, declared privately that Jackson made many "mis-appointments"; and Gideon Welles said the President allowed himself "to be importuned" into "very improper" selections. Welles added: "Office seeking and office getting has become a regular business where impudence triumphs over worth."

From what has been said it is evident that while the spoils system was a development in connection with the general evolution of democracy, Jackson did not try to check its progress but facilitated it. His removals were not as numerous as those under many later Presidents. President Cleveland, elected as a reformer, and acting under the pressure of party organization, removed many more.² It was in the nature of the case that the system should appear in connection with the forces which ruled public life at the time. Any man who could have been an

¹Howe, *Life of George Bancroft*, I., 197.

²Marcy to Van Buren, February 12, 1838; Welles to *Ibid*, April 27, 1838; Van Buren Mss.

³Dewey, *National Problems*, 35-39.

exponent of the democratic movement would probably have believed as Jackson believed in regard to appointments.

The group who advised with Jackson in making the cabinet continued to surround him after the inauguration and furnished the beginning of what came to be known as the "Kitchen Cabinet." Its membership varied from time to time; but W. B. Lewis, Amos Kendall, and A. J. Donelson, the President's private secretary, were generally in it. But Donelson was independent and was usually opposed to the Eaton-Lewis interest.¹ Van Buren was included also, but he was a member of the regular cabinet part of the time and his advice was probably on large matters rather than on the general affairs which are supposed chiefly to have engaged the attention of the "Kitchen Cabinet." Eaton was a member until he left Washington in 1831. Duff Green may have been admitted to council in the earliest months of the administration, but he could not have had a full membership. After the *Globe* was established in 1830, F. P. Blair, its editor, was a regular member.

The influence of this group was believed to be great. Jackson might well be sensitive on the point, since it tended to belittle him. "In regard now to these complaints," he said to John Randolph, "and others of a similar character founded on a pretended distrust of *influences* near or around me, I can only say that they spring from the same false view of my character. I should loath myself did any act of mine afford the slightest color for the insinuation that I followed blindly the judgment of any friend in the discharge of my proper duties as a public or private individual."²

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, III., 189; Van Buren Mss.

²Jackson to Randolph, November 11, 1831, Jackson Mss.

CHAPTER XXII

“THE EATON MALARIA”

THERE were better phases of Jackson's presidency than adopting the spoils system. We may have varying degrees of commendation for his attitude toward internal improvements, his destruction of the United States Bank, his introduction of vigor into our foreign relations, his prompt disposal of the Indian question in Georgia, and his opposition to nullification in South Carolina; but his course in regard to each has a defense which satisfies many fair minded men. This more attractive side of Jackson now lies before us; but before it can be considered another chapter must be given to party intrigue. An unpleasant episode here intervened and was utilized by the masters of the two factions in the party in such a way that it become an important historical event.

“The Eaton embroglio,” says Van Buren, was “a private and personal matter which only acquired political consequences by its adaptation to the gratification of resentments springing out of the formation of the cabinet, and, as was supposed, to the elevation or depression of individuals of high position.”¹ As Van Buren himself was one of the individuals referred to, his statement has peculiar interest. Abundant evidence has been given to show how much the Calhoun-Van Buren rivalry was present in making the cabinet.² It persisted after that event, and as Eaton was active in the interest of the secretary of state and the ladies who refused most strongly to receive Mrs. Eaton

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, 47; Van Buren Mss.

²See above, II., 410-418.

were associated with the friends of Calhoun, the matter was presented to Jackson as a conspiracy against Eaton by the Calhounites, and the presidential wrath which resulted was used to break down the vice-president's position in the party. Similar intrigues are found in the history of other nations; and they usually exist there, as in the case before us, in a circle which surrounds some ruler whose powerful will is not restrained by calm judgment.

When Eaton arrived in Washington in 1818 to become a senator he became a boarder at the tavern of William O'Neil, an Irishman whose ready wit made him popular among members of both houses of congress. “Peg O'Neil,” daughter of the host, was growing up into a dashing young woman whose rather free manner won her the disapprobation of the best society. Disagreeable stories were told about her, and they did not cease when she married Timberlake, a dissipated purser in the navy. He was frequently absent from home for long periods, during which she remained with her father and saw much of the boarders. It seems to have been during this period that her name and Eaton's began to be associated. History can have no object in proving that these persons did wrong: it is only essential to remember that many people of the day believed it. In 1828 Timberlake committed suicide at sea. Some said it was because of his own dissipation, others that it was from humiliation at the conduct of his wife. The following New Year's Day, Senator Eaton, intimate friend and party manager of the now triumphant Jackson, married the widow in Washington. His best friends felt that it was an unfortunate step.¹ Official society was already shocked at the crudeness of the manners of the new party: they were not willing

¹“Poor Eaton is to be married tonight to Mrs. T——! There is a vulgar saying of some vulgar man, I believe Swift, on such unions — about using a certain household. . . [*sic*] and then putting it on one's head.”—Cambreleng to Van Buren, January 1, 1829, Van Buren Mss. Cf. the following; “This is as they say, to beray the panier, and then put it on your head.”—Montaigne, *Essays*, (Temple Classics), V., 109.

to tolerate in addition a person whose reputation was assailed by common rumor.

Eaton's promotion to the cabinet was unpopular on the political side. Many Tennesseans disliked him, and the delegation in congress protested to Jackson himself. Judge White, the other senator, would have been more readily received as the man most worthy of recognition from the state. Eaton and Lewis were brothers-in-law, and both were committed to the cause of Van Buren. "No man," said Lewis long afterward when speaking of the New Yorker, "exerted himself more in his behalf than I did, or stood by him with more unshrinking firmness in the darkest hour of his political existence."¹ In the controversy over the treatment of Mrs. Eaton he was Jackson's personal adviser. Many of the letters in the affair are copied in his own hand. He was living in the President's mansion in close personal relations with Jackson. There can be little doubt that he stimulated the old man's suspicion and resentment and gave them a turn against the Calhoun faction. His manner of making himself feared by the office-seekers is seen from a protest of Gen. R. G. Dunlap, an outspoken Tennessean who long had acquaintance with the most prominent men in the state. "His only importance," wrote Dunlap to Jackson with the freedom of an old friend, "is that by his hinting impudence when out of your presence, of being in the Prest [President's] confidence he assumes the mark of an adviser. This holds you responsible for his silly conduct."² But the protest was futile, and Lewis kept his position of confidential adviser in small matters.

The announcement that Eaton would be in the cabinet brought protests from many people in Washington. Jackson heeded them not: he said he welcomed the opposition, that he felt happier

¹Lewis to Jackson, August 30, 1839, MSS in possession of W. C. Ford.

²Dunlap to Jackson, June 30, 1831, copy in Library of Congress.

in a storm, and that he would not abandon his friend.' But his determination did not improve Eaton's position in the city. "To-night," says a writer who could speak for society, "the bosom friend and almost adopted son of General Jackson, is to be married to a lady whose reputation, her previous connection with him both before and after her husband's death, has totally destroyed. She is the daughter of O'Neal who kept a large tavern and boarding house. . . . She has never been admitted into good society, is very handsome and of not an inspiring character and violent temper. She is, it is said, irresistible and carries whatever point she sets her mind on. The General's personal and political friends are very much disturbed about it; his enemies laugh and divert themselves with the idea of what a suitable lady in waiting Mrs. Eaton will make to Mrs. Jackson. . . . We spent the evening at Dr. Simm's last night. All present were Jacksonians — Dr. Simm the most ardent and devoted. He had lately received a letter from Gen'l. J. which he promised to show me. I wanted to see it immediately, suspecting, as I told him, if he deferred showing it, it would be with the intention of correcting the orthography. He laughed and joked on the subject very good naturedly and about Mrs. Jackson and her pipe in the bargain."*

At the time this letter was written Mrs. Jackson was in her grave and Mrs. Andrew J. Donelson, wife of the private secretary of the President, was designated for mistress of the official household. She was a woman of strong and placid character, competent to sustain the dignity of the station, and by no means disposed to tolerate the kind of woman Mrs. Eaton was reputed to be. Her husband was not strong for the Eaton-Lewis influence. He resented their methods and re-

*J. A. Hamilton to Van Buren, February 23, 1829, Van Buren Mss.

*Mrs. Smith, *First Forty Years of Washington Society* (Hunt, Editor), 252. Like many women of the frontier, Mrs. Jackson smoked a pipe.

belled when he felt that political faction was to be made to cover social impropriety. He was more emphatic than his wife in regard to the Eatons.¹

At the first official functions Mrs. Eaton was received with studied indifference by the wives of other cabinet officials. If they were in the same receiving party with her, they ignored her presence; if they were at dinner with her they spoke not; and all that Jackson could do to show his favor brought her no more consideration than at first. "With the exception of two or three timid and rather insignificant personages, who trembled for their husbands' offices," says our informant, "not a lady has visited her, and so far from being inducted into the President's house, she is, I am told, scarcely noticed by the females of his family."² The supporters of Adams and Clay observed this situation with pleasure and were willing to make it as unpleasant as possible. Observing their actions Jackson came to believe that all the trouble which fell on Eaton was designed by Clay. A few weeks later he thought the trouble began with Eaton's enemies who, despairing of office as long as the secretary of war had influence, wished in this manner to overthrow him. It was some months later when Jackson attributed the "conspiracy" to Calhoun.³

The storm burst on Jackson soon after the inauguration. Rev. J. M. Campbell, pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church at which the General and Mrs. Jackson formerly worshiped, felt impelled to remonstrate with him. He was a young man and did not dare approach Jackson himself, but got Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely, of Philadelphia, an old friend and correspondent of the President then in attendance on the inauguration, to promise to make the protest. Doctor Ely did not find an opportunity to do this in the capital, but on his return to his

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, 189, Van Buren Mss.

²Mrs. Smith, *First Forty Years of Washington Society* (Hunt, Editor), 288.

³Jackson to —, April 26, 1829, Jackson Mss.

home wrote at length, reciting the stories reported against Mrs. Eaton. Jackson's reply was characteristic. His correspondent did not know, he said, that the stories alluded to sprang out of Clay's contrivance and were circulated to blacken the writer through his friend. As for Mrs. Eaton he believed her a chaste and maligned woman, and his departed wife had believed her above reproach, and nothing short of absolute proof would convince him to the contrary. There is no record that Jackson ever changed an opinion once formed, whatever the proof offered to him. Now committed in this quarrel he remained till the end of the unhappy struggle firm on the side of what he thought injured honesty. "This," he said, "was a righteous course founded upon the principles of that gospel, which I not only profess to believe, but do religiously believe."¹ "I told them," he wrote to another, "I did not come here to make a Cabinet for the ladies of this place but for the nation, and that I believed, and so I do, that Mrs. Eaton [is] as chaste as those who attempt to slander her."²

The inner circle of the administration party desired to keep the affair out of politics, but their opponents forced it forward. Jackson's wrath could be counted on, and it was fair game to stimulate it to his own ruin. The Van Buren group also realized the opportunity it gave them to injure Calhoun; and so both forces coöperated to deepen the scandal.

During the spring and summer of 1829, Jackson, thoroughly bent on restoring the reputation of Mrs. Eaton, sent to various parts of the country to get evidence which would support his views. Finally on September 10th, when the affair had stewed for six months, he summoned the cabinet for the consideration of the matter. All the evidence he had collected was submitted to it and two of the chief accusers of Mrs. Eaton were brought

¹Jackson to Mr. S.—New York, September 27, 1829, Jackson Mss.

²Jackson to ———, April 26, 1829, Jackson Mss.

forward to testify in person. One of them remarked that he believed Eaton innocent, when the President exclaimed, "And Mrs. Eaton also!" The other replied, "On that point I would rather not give an opinion"; at which Jackson exclaimed, "She is as chaste as a virgin!" The second accuser desired to be heard, explaining that he had not meant to arraign the administration but to save it from discredit. He began to argue against the sufficiency of the evidence produced in support of the wife of the secretary of war, when Jackson sharply reminded him that he was summoned to give evidence and not to pass upon it. With this the meeting dissolved, the cabinet-members going away in a rather disgusted mood, and Jackson remaining satisfied with the investigation in which he played the parts of advocate and judge.¹

But poor Mrs. Eaton's position was no better than formerly. Mrs. Calhoun was against her; the ladies of the cabinet — even Mrs. Branch and Mrs. Berrien, whose husbands were brought into office through Eaton's influence, in order to weaken Calhoun — were all against her; the White House ladies were firmly of the same opinion; and some of the women of the diplomatic corps were as defiant as the American ladies. Society was rent in twain, and some prominent men left their families at home rather than encounter the perils of entertaining socially.

Van Buren was a widower, and thus had a rare opportunity to increase Jackson's friendship for him. He gave a dinner at which the slighted lady received from him every mark of respect. He called on her and in other ways showed his confidence in her. Through his influence Sir Charles Vaughan, the British minister, who was also unmarried, came to treat her with consideration. The two men with the President formed the centre of the Eaton party. At this time Van Buren was thrown into intimate relations with his superior in office. They

¹Parton, *Life of Jackson*, III., Chapter 18.

rode together daily, breakfasted together frequently, and exchanged views on most matters of governmental policy. But the secretary was too shrewd to refer to the bearing of the affair on his own case. Jackson later absolved him from any attempt to promote it as a means of defeating his rival.

By autumn, 1829, the situation in official society was acute. During the spring the government was newly organized and during the summer society was chiefly out of the city, so that there was no obligation to entertain officially. Until November no cabinet dinners were given, Jackson fearing that the ever present discord might embarrass them. But private entertainment was waiting, according to custom, on official hospitality, and people were remarking the condition into which society was drifting. The President and his secretary conferred and invitations were sent forthwith for a cabinet fête. All the members attended with their wives at the appointed time, which pleased the chief. He assumed his most courteous air and took out to dinner Mrs. Ingham, who was entirely committed to the insurgents. Van Buren took Mrs. A. J. Donelson. Both men tried to make the dinner table a scene of mirth; but they failed signally. They could make no impression on the stolid faces of the company, where rebellion was written on every feature. At length the company departed, leaving a sore and disappointed host. The occasion, as the secretary put it, was "a formal and hollow ceremony."

Next came, by regular usage, the dinner of the secretary of state. Whether in politics or society Van Buren was a good diplomatist, and he used all his ability to make his dinner a success. He expected, and he said as much to Jackson, that the opposition, unwilling to oppose the President openly, would take this as the occasion to show their hand, and that the cabinet ladies would decline to attend. With this in view he invited to the dinner Mrs. Randolph, a daughter of Thomas Jefferson,

and caused it to be known that the event was in a sense given in her honor. Her presence would repair the loss of prestige if all the cabinet wives were absent. His anticipations were correct: Branch and Ingham came to dinner, but their wives declined. Eaton and Barry also came, but their wives acting together remained at home. Berrien, the remaining member, had an engagement out of town. But Mrs. Randolph was present and charmed the company by her distinguished manners, and the dinner passed off very successfully.

Soon afterward the Russian minister, Baron Krudener, also a bachelor, gave a ball to the cabinet. As Mrs. Ingham was absent he took in Mrs. Eaton, next in rank in the cabinet precedence, and to Secretary Eaton fell Madame Huygens, wife of the Dutch minister. At this the Dutch lady was greatly offended and expressed her chagrin openly, and refused to remain in the dining-room when she saw she was to sit by Mrs. Eaton. She declared, so it was reported, that she would give a ball to which the upstart would not be invited, and Mrs. Branch, Mrs. Berrien, and Mrs. Ingham were said to have promised to do the same.¹ The report, whether true or not, made a great impression in the city. The inner White House circle pronounced it conspiracy to crush Mrs. Eaton, and since it could not be attributed to Clay it was laid at the doors of the vice-president, or his friends. When, a few days later, an anonymous letter appeared in a city paper attacking Van Buren for trying to force an objectionable woman on good society it was taken as confirmation of the charge. It was about this time that the intrigue was made to operate against Calhoun.

In the meantime, Mrs. Eaton made no progress. Entertainments in private houses were generally denied to her, but she continued to attend public affairs throughout the early winter. At last she was the object of such contempt at a ball

¹These events are described in Van Buren's *Autobiography*, III., 186-213, Van Buren Mss.

on January 8, 1830, that she could no longer expose herself to the chance of further indignity, and she began to remain at home.¹

Jackson was now deeply angry. He felt that his will was defied, and this touched him in the most sensitive spot. One morning before breakfast he summoned Van Buren, who found him in a state of excitement. His eyes were bloodshot and he admitted that he slept none the preceding night. He announced that he had come to a fixed determination as to his course in the much discussed affair, that he would investigate and if the reports of Madame Huygens's threat were true he would send her husband back to Holland and dismiss the cabinet for conspiring to bring him into contempt. Van Buren sought to quiet him. If there was a conspiracy, he said, the proposed manner of dealing with it was entirely proper, but he doubted if the Dutch lady made the threat attributed to her, and he offered to find out if she was guilty. He called on Huygens, with whom "as a brother Dutchman" he was on terms of friendship, and from both him and Madame Huygens secured such a plain denial of the alleged conspiracy that the President was satisfied.

But Jackson was not reassured. It was not his nature to submit to defiance, and Washington was plainly in arms against him. The rebels were women, safe from his vengeance, but he undertook to reach them through their husbands. Late in January he again summoned the secretary of state and showed him a paper he proposed to read to the cabinet. The visitor objected that the paper did not say clearly enough that Jackson had no intention of interfering with the domestic affairs of his advisers, and he suggested that it be read to the cabinet and not sent to them in writing.² The suggestion was followed, and

¹Mrs. Smith, *First Forty Years of Washington Society*, (Hunt, Editor) 311.

²Van Buren, *Autobiography*, III., 209-212, Van Buren Mss.

Ingham, Branch, and Berrien were summoned to an interview which Jackson described as follows:

Several members [of congress] came to me and after reporting these facts [in relation to the alleged conspiracy], asked if I intended to permit such an indignity to be offered to me unnoticed: I assured them I would not, and that I would call for explanations from them. I therefore sent and had an interview with these Gentlemen. I informed them of the information I had recd of the combination from the members of congress, and the plan having been carried into execution and that I had sent for them for explanation and enquiry whether the information I had recd was correct. When we met I read them the following statement:—

The personal difficulties between some of the members of my cabinet have assumed an aspect and received a bearing in regard to myself which requires an expression of my personal feelings. To prevent future misunderstandings I have deemed it expedient to have this interview with Mr. Ingham, Mr. Branch, and Mr. Berrien. When we met I said to them (Mr. Ingham, Mr. Branch, and Mr. Berrien)¹ that the course pursued by them to Major Eaton and his family as reported to me, was in my opinion, under the circumstances not only unjust in itself but disrespectful to myself. The grounds upon which this opinion is founded are substantially these:

I do not claim the right to interfere in any manner in the domestic relations or personal intercourse of any member of my cabinet nor have I ever in any manner attempted it. But from information, and my own observation on the general course of events I am fully impressed with a belief that you and your families, have in addition to the exercise of their own undoubted rights in this respect taken measures to induce others to avoid intercourse with Mrs. Eaton and thereby sought to exclude her from society and degrade him. It is impossible for me on the fullest and most dispassionate view and consideration of the subject to regard this course in any other light than a wanton disregard of my feelings and a reproach of my official

¹The text has been followed literally. It is not always in direct quotation.

conduct. It is I, that have without solicitation or design on his part called Major Eaton into my cabinet, and it is I, that with the fullest conviction of the injustice of the imputations which as I firmly believe malice and envy have cast upon his wife continue him there. If her character is such as to justify active measures on the part of the members of my cabinet to exclude her from virtuous society it is I who am responsible to the community for this alledged indignity to the public morals. I will not part with Major Eaton from my cabinet and those of my cabinet who cannot harmonize with it had better withdraw, for harmony I must and will have. It is in vain to attempt to disguise the true aspect of the question, and it is not in my nature to do so if I could; nor can I consent to harbor any feelings toward those with whom I am in the habit of daily association without distinctly expressing and apprising them of these opinions. My whole life has been at variance with such a course, and I am too old to practice it now. I must cease to respect myself when I find I am capable of it. Therefore have I sought this interview, to assure you that if there be any truth in the report that you have entered into the combination charged, to drive Major Eaton from my cabinet that I feel it an indignity and insult offered to myself, and is of a character that will remain hereafter to be condemned.¹

On this paper Jackson endorsed:

This was read to them, and being informed by the gentlemen that as far as their influence went, it was exercised differently, and their wish was to harmonize the cabinet, I determined not to dismiss them.

But he sent them away with the suggestion that they "arrange their parties in the future so that the world should not get this impression"; i. e., the impression that they were determined not to recognize the Eatons.

"The Eaton Malaria," as Van Buren aptly called it, was

¹The memorandum quoted exists in Jackson's own hand. Several copies of it are in the Jackson Mss. See also Jackson to Eaton, July 19, 1830, Jackson Mss. For Berrien's account of the affair, see Niles, *Register*, XL., 381-384 and *ante*.

now come to its most noxious stage. Washington gossip talked of nothing else, public business halted, and there was general expectation that the cabinet would be reorganized. But some calm head, it could hardly have been Jackson's, worked for restraint. The paper read to the cabinet members suggests two explanations, in each of which there is probably some truth. In one sense it was an expression of an egotistical man's sense of indignity at being thwarted in his will; in another it may well have been presented to the three gentlemen in the hope that through a sense of resentment or propriety they would resign their positions. When the wrath of the President abated somewhat and the rebuked officials did not resign, the situation became slightly less strenuous. The administration would have welcomed their withdrawal, but it was not willing to assume the responsibility of disrupting the cabinet on such grounds. It was extremely doubtful if even Jackson's popularity could at this time stand the odium of dividing his party to serve an intriguing favorite.

The culmination of this quarrel marks also a change in the President's relation to the city in which he was now the leading citizen. At his arrival he was much talked about. In spite of what his enemies said of his policy and capacity, his character remained unimpeached. People had a feeling of sympathy for the frank and brave old man, now burdened by domestic affliction, whose shortcomings sprang chiefly from neglected opportunities. Mrs. Smith, an intimate friend of Clay's family and wife of the president of the branch of the United States Bank, wrote: "I think I shall like him vastly when I know him — I have heard a number of things about him which indicate a kind, warm, feeling and affectionate heart.— I hope sincerely he may get safely over the *breakers* which beset his entrance into port, and when in — God grant the good old man a safe anchorage in still waters." A year later the same writer was entirely in

sympathy with the opposition. “Altho’ I sincerely believe him to be a warm, kind-hearted old man,” she wrote “yet so passionate and obstinate, that such a subserviency must be very galling and hard to bear. In truth, the only excuse his best friends can make for his violence and imbecilities, is, that he is in his dotage.”¹

Mrs. Eaton’s withdrawal from social functions relieved somewhat the acuteness of the situation. The cabinet went on without open friction, but still without cordial coöperation until in the following year it was reorganized by the resignation of a part and the dismissal of all the rest of the members but one.

Major Eaton’s friends speak of him as good-natured and able. In Washington he was undoubtedly popular, and but for his wife’s controversy he might have maintained himself in the party he did so much to organize. Spite of the loyal support of his chief, success was now impossible. Moreover, the controversy embittered his temper and made him a host of enemies and was, through the plans of his wife, shifted to Tennessee, where he had opponents also. In the summer of 1830 the couple were in that state. Jackson was there, also, to spend a vacation. The preceding hot season he passed at the Rip Raps, a pleasant islet which the government owned in Hampton Roads; but now he returned to the “Hermitage,” doubly dear by reason of its association with his departed wife. The old scenes brought a revival of his sorrow and increased his feeling of loneliness; for the all pervading controversy had divided his own household.

In the “Hermitage,” scowling and bemoaning the ingratitude of those for whom he had done so much, he heard that the Eatons were coming to the state capital and that the leading society there were determined not to receive them. He aroused himself instantly; the travelers were invited to make a visit to his home, and preparations were made to give the affair all

¹Mrs. Smith, *First Forty Years of Washington Society*, (Hunt, Editor), 285, 321.

possible éclat. His own connections, that is to say, Mrs. Jackson's relatives, were divided by the controversy, but steps were taken to bring them together so that the family should not appear to be inharmonious.

All eyes turned to the "Hermitage," and Jackson's friends in the Tennessee towns through which Eaton must pass arranged dinners which must satisfy the utmost vanity of the visitors. The Nashville banquet was to be especially distinguished, but many people, some of them leading democrats, refused to attend. To Jackson this was conspiracy — a part of the Washington conspiracy, he said. It seemed essential to have a more successful reception at his home, and this could not be done unless the Donelsons were united. To secure such union he appealed to General Coffee, next to himself the most prominent member of the connection. That gentleman labored hard and patched up a truce, by which all parties agreed to come to the "Hermitage" and show formal respect to its visitors. "My dear Major," now wrote the host to Eaton with satisfaction, "I send my son to meet you at Judge Overton's, and to conduct you and your lady with our other friends to the Hermitage where you will receive the heartfelt welcome that you were ever wont to do, when my Dr. departed wife was living. Her absence makes everything here wear to me a gloomy and melancholy aspect, but the presence of her old and sincere friend will cheer me amidst the melancholy gloom with which I am surrounded. My neighbours and connections will receive you and your Lady with that good feeling which is due to you, and I request you and your Lady will meet them with your usual courtesy."¹ Thus outward peace was restored, while beneath the surface were still bitterness and war.

With the coming of autumn the storm shifted its centre to Washington, but there was no yielding on the part of "the

¹Jackson to Eaton, August 3, 1830, *Jackson MSS.*

conspiracy." In fact, it laid a firmer hold on its object by depriving him of A. J. Donelson, on whose services he was much dependent. Mrs. Donelson, presiding over her uncle's establishment, received Mrs. Eaton as her uncle's guest, but she would not call on her. This finally irritated Jackson so much that he gave his niece the option between yielding or leaving the White House. She chose the latter, and nephew and niece went back to Tennessee. The lonely old man was deeply hurt and voiced his despair as follows:

If my family and professed friends had remained faithful to me, and the great interests of their country, instead of falling into the trap of the great intriguer Mr. Calhoun, how much better for them, and gratifying to me. They have decided and withdrawn from me. I rest upon providence and the good sense of the people for my support, and I am sure it is the best. The only thing to be regretted is, I am thrown upon strangers, who I have to rely [*sic*], instead of those I took great pains in educating that they might be a comfort and aid to me, in my declining years. I have hitherto had sufficient energy to pass thro' any and every difficulty that presented, and I still trust that a kind providence will not forsake me in the severest trouble.¹

In September, 1831, Donelson and his family returned and peace again ruled in the mansion,² but at this time the Cabinet was renewed, and the source of discord was happily removed from the city. Jackson said he hoped they came "with all those feelings which ought at first to have accompanied them hither. They know my *course and my wishes*, and I hope they come to comply with them."³

In these later stages the "Eaton Malaria" runs into the Calhoun quarrel and the general party upheaval which accompanied

¹Jackson to Rev. H. M. Cryer, May 20, 1830, *American Historical Magazine* (Nashville), IV., 234.

²W. B. Lewis to Van Buren, September 17, 1831, Van Buren Mss.

³Jackson to Van Buren, September 5, 1831, Van Buren Mss.

the steady advance of Van Buren into the position as heir apparent.

Before we consider these things we must know about Jackson's relation to the general political progress in the early part of his administrations.

CHAPTER XXIII

CHECKING THE DESIRE FOR INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS

THE first congress under President Jackson met December 7, 1829. Andrew Stevenson, a Virginia republican, was chosen speaker of the house by the votes of 159 of the 194 members present. His following represented all who opposed Adams and Clay, and most of it would probably have gone for the new President had he favored the old Monroe policies. But Andrew Jackson had his peculiar support and he was going to have his peculiar policies. Out of them sprang the historic democratic party, whose birth may well be placed at this period. It was Jackson's vigorous personality and the advancement of Martin Van Buren which drove this dividing wedge into the older organization. Clay gathered up as far as he could all the riven fragments and united them with what was left of the Adams-Clay following, with an eye to the election of 1832. The group which grew out of his efforts became the whig party.

The new cabinet was approximately representative of the combined interests which voted for the victor, but the new policies were chiefly dictated by one section of the cabinet. Monroe and Adams and their predecessors treated the cabinet as a council of state, which adopted policies on the initiative of the President. Many of Jackson's wisest supporters desired him to follow the same practice, since that would give the more experienced men in the party an opportunity to modify the course

to be pursued. But he decided otherwise.¹ A short time after the inauguration he ceased to call cabinet meetings. Heads of departments he treated as high administrative officers, and the consideration of policies was left to informal consultations with those intimate friends in whom he had confidence. He tended to reduce the cabinet to the rank of administrative subordinates.² After the reorganization of 1831 he showed less of this purpose. He consulted freely in reference to the removal of the deposits. But when his mind was made up on an important affair he was apt to override cabinet opinion.

The first annual message contained both old and new ideas. Of the former were its recommendations that internal improvements ought to be undertaken but by some means which would be constitutional and which would not create discord among the lawmakers, that the public debt ought to be paid, and that the Indians should not be allowed to set up a state within the jurisdiction of Georgia. Two other principles must have disappointed the strict republicans, although they were calculated to please members of the party who supported the national program which Calhoun had favored. They were: (1) That free trade is desirable, but since "we must ever expect selfish

¹Among the Jackson Mss., without date, but classified as of October, 1828, is a "memorandum of points to be considered in the administration of the government." It is in Jackson's hand and reads: "Mr. R—— R——, Virginia: 1st A strong constitutional attorney-general.

"2nd A genuine old-fashioned cabinet to act together and form a council consultative.

"3rd No editors to be appointed.

"4th No members of Congress, except heads of Departments or Foreign Ministers, to be appointed.

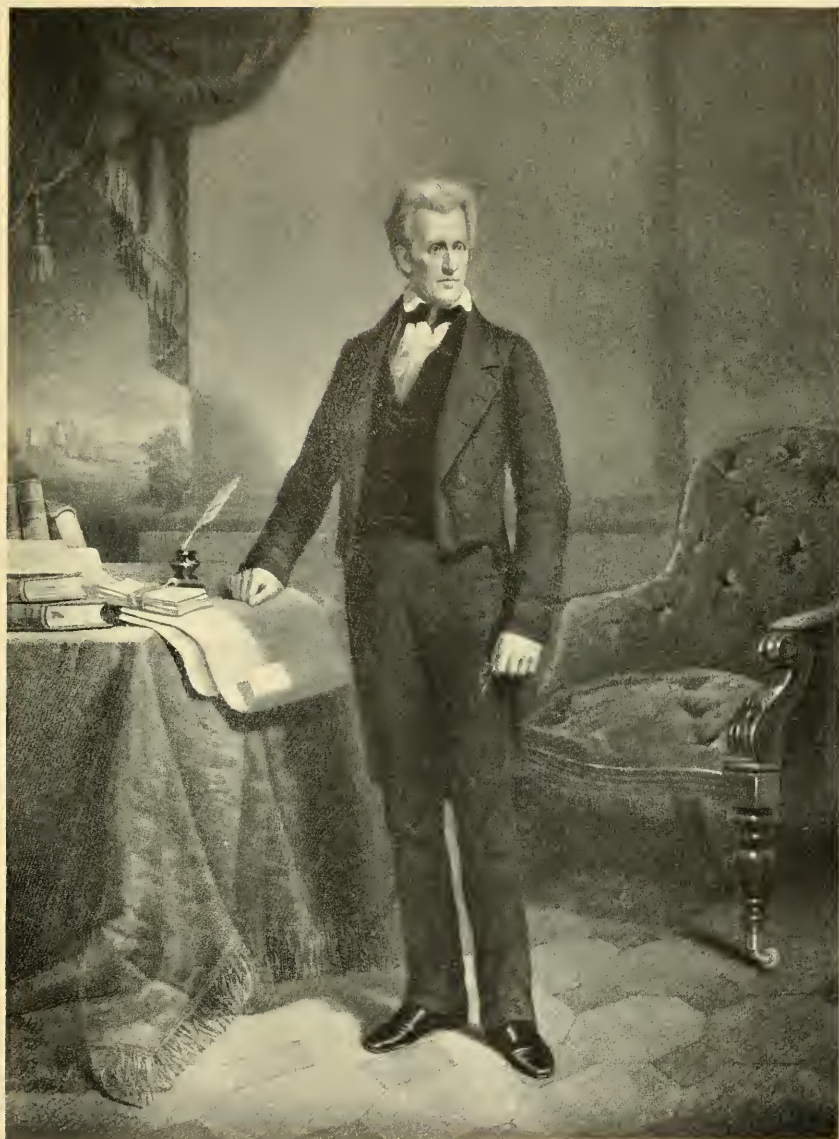
"5th No foreign missions to be originated without the Senate &c &c.

"6th The Public Debt paid off, the Tariff modified and no power usurped over internal improvements.

"7th A high minded enlightened principle on the administration of the govt. as to appointments and removals. These things will give a brilliant career to the administration."

I cannot think this paper contains Jackson's own views. It seems to have been a memorandum he made for his guidance in summing up the views of another man. The line at the top, "Mr. R — e R — Va," suggests Ritchie, editor of the *Richmond Enquirer*, whom Van Buren in writing to Jackson the following spring called the most influential editor in the country. He spoke for the Virginia faction and was heard far and wide. There is no evidence that he visited the "Hermitage" before the inauguration, but the summary of his views could have been made by Jackson after an interview with some intermediary, or as a deduction from Ritchie's editorials. The second and third points of the memorandum are clearly contrary to Jackson's opinions, which would make it improbable that the paper was intended to record his ideas.— J. S. B.

²For a good discussion of Jackson's relation to the cabinet, see MacDonald, *Jacksonian Democracy*, 226.



ANDREW JACKSON

From a portrait by D. M. Carter, engraved by A. H. Ritchie. Carter, born in 1827, and eighteen when Jackson died, could hardly have painted from life. He seems to have followed a portrait by Earl. The picture, engraved by the popular Ritchie, was purchased by many admirers of the General

legislation in other nations" we must continue "to adapt our own to their regulations," that the existing tariff had brought neither the ills nor the benefits predicted for it and should be modified, and that all sections "should unite in diminishing any burthen of which either may justly complain";¹ and (2) That the surplus revenue after the debt was paid should be distributed among the states. Calhoun, in common with all who opposed a high tariff, objected to distribution because by diminishing the surplus it lessened the need of tariff reduction, but many of his older followers in the Middle States and the West gave it hearty support. Another recommendation, although it rested logically on old republican principles, was in its practical import essentially new and was destined to become the most characteristic measure of the democratic party in its early phase. It referred to the United States Bank and said that in the opinion of the President it was not too soon to consider the recharter of the institution and that it was certain that some of the objects for which the bank was founded were not accomplished.

Jackson took his immense popularity for approval of his policy, and he was right in doing so; for although his military reputation brought him before the people, the feeling that he represented them and could be trusted to act for them served to sustain him in his long period of public life. He considered his own ideas the people's ideas. No President kept a more watchful eye on congress to see that they did not violate the will of the people. Excluded from congressional halls by custom, through friends he kept well informed of all that transpired there. Either A. J. Donelson or Major Lewis was usually there and made quick report to the chief. Thus the leader added to the ordinary feeling of party loyalty the force of a mild terror, increasing the coherence of his own party and embittering the attitude of his opponents.

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 442.

The house was tractable but the senate was otherwise. The removal of officials particularly displeased it. It debated for some time a resolution questioning the President's power of removal; but the practice was too long established to be overthrown. The senate showed displeasure by rejecting some of the nominations and by making others appear so dubious that they were withdrawn by the President. One of the unfortunates was Isaac Hill, of New Hampshire, a relentless champion of democracy in whose newspaper the most cruel things were said about the enemies of Jackson. The senate refused to confirm his nomination and he went back to New Hampshire in a rage. He soon had his revenge. Levi Woodbury, a senator with higher ambitions, was induced to resign his seat and, in 1831, Hill came back to Washington as senator-elect in his stead. When the cabinet was reorganized in the same year Woodbury's self-denial had its reward. It pleased Jackson and the whole administration party to see him whom the dignified upper chamber thought unfit for second comptroller of the treasury taking at the behest of the people a seat in the very body which rejected him. But the senate had too much respect for the President's popularity to embarrass him with many rejections. Later, when feeling ran higher, they were not so considerate of his wishes. Daniel Webster correctly described the situation in saying: "Were it not for the fear of the outdoor popularity of General Jackson, the senate would have negatived more than half his nominations. There is a burning fire of discontent that must, I think, some day break out. When men go so far as to speak warmly against things which they yet feel bound to vote for, we may hope they will soon go a little further."¹

There was undoubtedly discontent in the party, but Jackson's courage and strength were to prove sufficient for its control.

¹Webster, *Private Correspondence*, I., 501.

It was excellent strategy to force Hill on the senate as a vindication of his nomination and as a way of letting the world see how General Jackson could make himself obeyed. The world was going to see in a few years many similar illustrations of his capacity for political command.

Some of the signs of discontent came from followers of Calhoun. They did not relish Van Buren's steady march into presidential confidence, and Duff Green's columns revealed their cooling ardor. Jackson urged Green to write more incisively, saying with his usual plainness that congress was giving itself chiefly to president-making. The editor showed his pique in his reply. How could he defend the administration's policies unless he knew what they were, he said. Since the cabinet met no longer to consider policies of government, no one felt authorized to defend a measure as an expression of party purpose.¹ Green's reply had much truth in it, but it made no impression on Jackson. The influence of Van Buren steadily increased and through it an issue was made in this very session of congress which, while it struck openly at Clay, dealt Calhoun a severe blow in a less obvious way. It was the veto of the Maysville Road Bill, which checked the impulse for roads and canals at national expense, a measure on which rested much of the South Carolinian's strength.

Calhoun was most prominently identified with internal improvements, one of the movements for domestic development which became popular after the war of 1812. He was responsible in 1817 for the bill to use for this purpose the bonus of the Second United States Bank, which Madison vetoed on constitutional grounds. Accompanying the veto was a suggestion that the constitution be amended to allow the expenditure of money for public improvements, but nothing came of it. The people of the Northwest were especially anxious for roads and

¹Cited by Parton, *Life of Jackson*, III., 277.

canals; they were not able to construct them by private enterprise, the new state governments were not rich enough for the task, and they turned to the national government. Pennsylvania, through whose territory lay the route to the West most talked about, also supported the movement. Besides these, a few people everywhere believed that the government should undertake such works. Federalists supported the movement as it suited their interests rather than from principle, it seems, since New England, the centre of federalism, but already supplied with roads and somewhat equipped with canals, went strongly against the measure.

Madison's veto did not end the agitation. Military roads were from the first favored by a larger number of people than non-military roads; and there was now disposition to place the whole movement on that basis. Resolutions were passed asking the secretary of war, Calhoun, to report a system of such internal improvements as were necessary to the public defense. He complied willingly and in 1819 submitted a comprehensive plan which he said would be "among the most efficient means for the more complete defense of the United States." But he was careful to add that the work should not be authorized unless it was considered constitutional and that he did not enter into that phase of the question.¹ The report served for propaganda, as was doubtless intended, and three years later the feeling for roads and canals was still stronger. Both principle and local interest combined to make a majority for it in congress. The strict republicans, with the Virginia leaders at their head, viewed this growth of opinion with alarm; and Monroe was not sorry for an opportunity to give it a check. He made a bill to collect tolls on the Cumberland road serve as an occasion. In vetoing it on May 4, 1822, he submitted his "Views on the Subject of Internal Improvements," a historical discussion of

¹*American State Papers, Miscellaneous*, 534.

the question from the constitutional standpoint; and he added that there should be an amendment to permit the construction of roads and canals.¹ This document was well received by the strict republicans, and Jackson wrote its author in terms of warm commendation for its principles.

Nevertheless, the subject would not down. In 1824 a bill was passed to authorize a survey of such transportation routes as were necessary to the commercial, military, and postal needs of the country. Monroe approved the bill on the ground that it was in the province of congress to ascertain what was needed in this nature. The execution of the task fell to Calhoun, still secretary of war. The series of roads and canals which he now recommended was large enough to offer something to every important section of the union. It embraced: (1) A canal from Washington to the Ohio to be extended later to Lake Erie; (2) An inland waterway along the Atlantic coast from the Potomac to Boston harbor; and (3) A road from Washington to New Orleans. Calhoun added that there were other improvements which, while not essential, were "deemed of great importance in a commercial and military view." They were canals connecting the Savannah, Alabama, and Tennessee Rivers, the James and the Kanawha, the Susquehanna and the Allegheny, the St. Johns in Florida with the Gulf of Mexico, and the St. Lawrence with Lake Champlain. Nor was this all: in due time other routes were recommended, as a road from Baltimore to Philadelphia, another from Washington to Buffalo, the extension of the Cumberland Road to the capital of Missouri, and a canal from Lake Pontchartrain to the Mississippi. This survey was defended on the ground that it would be an intelligent suggestion for the expenditure of private and state funds. The strict republicans opposed it on the ground that it sought to combine the interests of all parts of the union in

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 142, 183.

a congressional majority large enough to override a presidential veto. It was undoubtedly calculated to whet the popular desire for internal improvements. Jefferson and his Virginia followers declared with dismay that this tendency was irresistible.¹

Of the candidates for the presidency then before the country, Clay, Adams, and Calhoun were openly for internal improvements and they were willing to avoid constitutional objections by trusting to a favorable interpretation of the right of congress to establish post roads, or to regulate interstate commerce, or to provide for the public defense. Calhoun's constitutional position was not quite so clear as Clay's and Adams's, probably because of South Carolina's trend to strict construction. Jackson also favored internal improvements when they could be shown to contribute to the military safety of the nation. But he held some decided opinions about state rights, and it could be foretold how he would act if the matter were robbed of its military significance.

Only Crawford, of the five candidates, was clear in his opposition to the policy, and when he was eliminated by illness there was much discouragement among those who thought that the government should not play into the hands of politicians who stimulated the demands of interested voters. The election of Adams and his combination with Clay made it seem probable that this policy would gain rapidly in the country. On the other hand drawing Crawford, Calhoun, and Jackson into the opposition gave strength to those who objected to internal improvements. Van Buren was strongest in the combination and sought to carry it over to the strict republican view. December 20, 1825, he introduced a resolution denying the power of congress to construct roads and canals, but the senate left it unnoticed.

¹*Writing of Jefferson* (Memorial Edition), XVI., 140.

While no great work of internal improvement was authorized under Adams, smaller works, roads and harbors, were ordered to the extent of more than two millions, which was two and a third times as much as was spent for the same purposes under all the preceding Presidents. Each appropriation stimulated the demand for others, and the success of the Erie Canal, completed in 1825, seemed to add confirmation to all favorable prophecies. There was undoubtedly a strong tide running for public improvements at the close of this administration, held back only by the factious quality of the opposition to Adams. But with the advent of a new President other results seemed likely.¹

Jackson's views of the constitution were formed through feeling rather than intellect. They were formed in the early school of Monroe and Randolph, and although he voted for military roads and for the systems of surveys of 1824, he was likely to come over to the opposition when shown that it took the same position as the party to which he gave his first allegiance. The veto of 1822 served such a purpose. "My opinion has always been," he wrote to Monroe, "that the Federal Government did not possess the constitutional right; that it is retained to the states," and that in time of war the national authority may repair roads and control them but must surrender them when peace returns.² In the first draft of the inaugural address, however, he showed that he was carried away by the Western sentiment, saying that internal improvements, when not of an entirely local character, should be built by the national government. When the address had gone through the hands of prudent advisers in Washington it merely declared that "internal improvements and the diffusion of knowledge, so far as they can be promoted by the constitutional acts of

¹Turner, *Rise of the New West*, 224-235, 286-288.

²Jackson to Monroe, July 26, 1822, Jackson MSS

the Federal Government, are of high importance." In his first annual message he came again to the subject and said that the surplus revenue after the debt was paid should be divided among the states in proportion to population for internal improvements. The old method of distribution by congress directly he said was bad, meaning, as it seems, on account of the jobbery in applications. He did not appear to realize that distribution to the states would largely transfer this jobbery from congress to state legislatures. But even here Jackson guarded himself by saying that if the constitution would not allow the suggested course an amendment should be submitted to the people to secure the desired permission.¹

Van Buren, apparently, was sincerely opposed to the policy of internal improvements. He voted for some of the earlier bills, but Monroe's veto put him to thinking, and he concluded that the policy was both dangerous and unconstitutional.² Afterward he opposed it as opportunity offered but noticed that it gained continually in public opinion. He at length decided that nothing could stand against it but Jackson's popularity; and he determined to try to bring that to bear. As early as possible after he entered the cabinet he discussed the matter with the President.

The two men proved to be at one in the matter. A careful consideration showed that they felt it necessary to check the course of public opinion, and it was agreed that the secretary should keep his eye on congress and report to the President when a bill was being debated which seemed proper for veto. The design was kept quite secret by the two men, which was ever Van Buren's inclination in regard to contemplated actions. In politics he liked to move quickly and unexpectedly on an adversary.

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 451.

²Van Buren, *Autobiography*, III., 149, 152-158; Van Buren Mss.

Affairs in Pennsylvania at that time made it a delicate thing to oppose internal improvements. The state was largely committed to that policy both because any direct approach to the upper Ohio must pass through its bounds, and because a number of wealthy contractors in Philadelphia were actively agitating at the national capital and among the people at large in behalf of appropriations, from which they expected to reap large profits. They had strong influence with the state politicians and controlled a number of newspapers. Beside this, the Quakers, a numerous body of voters, were already displeased at Jackson because he favored the removal of the Cherokees in Georgia; and if he had any definite plans against the United States Bank he must have realized that he would need, in order to carry them through in Pennsylvania, the home of the parent bank, all possible popularity in that state. These various things were duly considered by Van Buren, but he concluded that the President's popularity was enough to overcome even these difficulties and Jackson, agreeing to take the responsibility, it was determined to go ahead with the program.

April 26, 1830, McDuffie, of South Carolina, was in the midst of a stately speech on the inequalities of the tariff. At the end of two hours he paused and said that he had now submitted the dry and less interesting part of his argument, that the remainder would be more pleasing, and that with the permission of the house he should like to discontinue at that time and conclude the next day. He was indulged, and Fletcher, of Kentucky, suggested that the rest of the sitting be given to some minor bill that could be passed in a short time and moved a consideration of the bill to subscribe to the stock of a road from Maysville, Ky., to Lexington, in the same state. Then in the most confident tone he explained that the Kentucky legislature had incorporated the company to build and operate the road, that while it was within the state entirely, it was part of what

would be a great national road when completed, and that by taking stock in so promising an enterprise the government could not lose its investment. He spoke briefly and was followed by a Georgian who was surprised that Fletcher should fancy the bill would have no opposition. It was essentially a local bill, and it precipitated a debate which ran through three days before the house passed it by a vote of 102 to 86. The senate debate on the measure is lost but it passed that body safely and went to the President about May 20th.

The Maysville Road was as local as any important road within a state could be. It was in the state in which Clay lived and the bill was supposed to be a kind of challenge from that gentleman, both of which facts, it seemed to Van Buren, would appeal to the President. As soon as the house approved the measure he mentioned it to Jackson in one of their daily rides on the Tenallytown road. He offered to submit reasons — which he had already prepared — why the bill should not become a law. The offer was accepted, and the paper which was handed over was kept for five days without intimation of the President's opinion on it. Jackson then announced his entire acquiescence and asked the secretary to prepare a statement of the constitutional grounds on which a veto might rest. This kind of a document had also been previously prepared in anticipation of such a request, and it was duly handed to the head of the government. Van Buren also suggested that if a statement of the national finances were made it would show that there was not enough money in the treasury to pay the due proportion of the national debt, provide for the expenses of government, and support internal improvements. This suggestion was followed also.

The bill represented a popular opinion, and a veto needed all possible support. Not one in twenty, says Van Buren, believed that Jackson would venture to reject it, and it was the

intention of the secretary of state that they should not know it until the bill was passed. He feared that Clay, if he thought a veto imminent, would drop the bill and bring in another less local and one in which a larger group of people were interested. Jackson at first was for opening the way for the veto by proper editorials in the newspapers and as soon as the plan was settled said, "Give it to Blair," which he habitually pronounced "Bla-ar." But the arch-schemer induced him to conceal his intentions.

In spite of these precautions an inkling of what was coming got abroad, and the Kentuckians were much disturbed. They sent R. M. Johnson, at that time a close friend of Jackson's, to ascertain what he would do. The visitor was given to grandiloquent language, even in private conversation. When he entered the President's office the secretary of state was prudently present. As the visitor proceeded with his argument his language became warm. He said that the state of Kentucky demanded the Maysville Road, and that to veto the bill would defeat the democratic party in the state. "If this hand were an anvil," he exclaimed, extending the left arm with the palm upward, "and a fly were sitting on it, and a sledge-hammer should come down on it like this" — bringing down his right hand with a blow — "that fly would not be more surely crushed than the democratic party in Kentucky would be crushed by this veto."

At this point Jackson, whose interest grew with Johnson's, rose to his feet with an air which meant danger. Had the speaker considered the state of the treasury balance? "No," was the reply. "Well, I have," said the general hotly; and he went on to say that he was elected to pay off the national debt, how could this be done and the proposed internal improvements constructed without borrowing? — and borrow he would not.

The President's fervor disconcerted his interlocutor, who

hesitated and prepared to leave the room. Van Buren watched the scene with deep interest. He feared, he tells us, that Jackson's temper had revealed too much of his purpose and observed to Johnson that he must not think the President's mind was made up, and, in fact, that he and Jackson were just going over the Maysville bill when the visitor arrived. At this Jackson took his cue, changed his tone, and succeeded in restoring the Kentuckian to what Van Buren calls "his accustomed urbanity." Johnson faithfully reported to his colleagues all these occurrences. Then they asked him what he thought Jackson would do with the bill. He replied that in his opinion nothing short of a voice from heaven could prevent "Old Hickory" from vetoing the bill, and he doubted if that could prevent it.

Interest in the outcome was now stronger than ever, but no one cared to risk a second interview with Jackson. They went to Van Buren instead, both friends and opponents of the bill. He had much trouble to keep them from finding out what was to be done; but mysterious silence was one of his peculiar qualifications, and he employed it here so well that he not only deceived the interrogators but even created the opinion that he was opposed to the veto. One of the reasons said to have been given for rejecting him as minister to England in 1832 was that he favored the Maysville Road.

The senate was debating the bill while this was going on, and in due time they gave their assent. The Western states and Pennsylvania now looked anxiously to Jackson. Van Buren was also deeply concerned, and he kept close to the President's side. On the morning the veto was sent to congress, he breakfasted at the White House, Barry, Eaton, Lewis, and Felix Grundy being present also. The others had long faces, knowing what was coming and believing it would damage the party. Jackson was extremely weak from illness, and the

secretary of state while assisting him up the stairs remarked that the others seemed alarmed. "Yes," was the reply, "but don't mind that. The thing is here [touching his breast-pocket] and shall be sent up as soon as congress convenes."

The veto was addressed to the house of representatives, in which the bill originated. Its reading was received with severe silence. It not only defeated the Maysville Road, but it challenged the principle of internal improvements. Some of the democrats were alarmed, some were angry, some predicted that the result would be fatal in Pennsylvania and the West, and others saw in it a shrewd electioneering move, worthy of the astute secretary of state. Care had been taken to write the veto so that it would appeal to the largest number of people. Those whose interests would be injured by it were ignored — their opposition was taken for granted; but every possible phase of constitutionality and expediency was exploited to convince the people at large that to appropriate the national funds for roads and canals was illegal and unwise.

The defeat of the measure pleased the old republicans. They attributed it largely to Van Buren and on it founded a hope that the Western influence would not entirely direct the party. In Virginia a number of them assembled to give John Randolph a parting dinner before his departure for Russia. One of the toasts was, *The rejection of the Maysville Road Bill — It falls upon the ear like the music of other days.* This was drunk standing with three times three cheers. In Pennsylvania the impression was not at first so favorable. A congressman from that state remonstrated with Jackson in person. He was patiently heard and told to say no more until he consulted his constituency. He promised to do this and a short time after he reached his district he wrote to say that the voters endorsed the President.

"The veto,"¹ says Van Buren, "was the wedge which split the party of internal improvements, a party which was 'wielded by a triumvirate of active and able young statesmen as a means through which to achieve for themselves the glittering prize of the Presidency, operating in conjunction with minor classes of politicians, looking in the same general direction, and backed by a little army of cunning contractors.'" Calhoun, Clay, and Adams had each leaned hard on internal improvements, from them each drew much of his popularity; and the removal of the issue from the field of active politics was a sad blow to each. Clay and Adams could have expected little else, but to Calhoun it gave notice that he was losing position in the democratic party and that his rival was in the lead. The fact that the defeat of internal improvements would weaken Calhoun probably added to the secretary of state's zeal in the matter; although it must be remembered that the advisers from Tennessee, generally opposed to the vice-president, were not now against him, but held back on account of what they considered party expediency.

The Maysville veto was skilfully written. Its purpose was to overthrow a well-rooted popular feeling. An embarrassing feature was that Jackson himself had voted for the survey bill of 1824 and for some other minor bills to construct roads. The document, therefore, must not make him appear inconsistent or seem to despise the popular fancy. Little regard was paid to the opinion of the politicians, for it was believed that they would acquiesce if public opinion could be reached. As to the contractors, they were equally ignored; for their opposition was certain whatever was done against them, and their rage would only serve to show they were speculators disappointed of their profits, and that all Jackson had said about them was true.

¹Van Buren tells the story of the Maysville veto with full details and with apparent frankness. See *Autobiography*, III., 152-169, Van Buren Mss.

In his argument Jackson emphasized the local character of the proposed road; and while he did not openly dispute the principle of appropriations of this kind, he depicted incidentally many of the evils he thought would come from it. We had gone too far, he said, from the principles of 1798 to take a stand now on the strictest construction of the constitution in regard to appropriations. Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe signed bills to construct roads, and as for Adams, it was well known that he was committed fully to internal improvements. The apparent reluctance with which this was admitted would please the strict republicans, and the willingness to accept things accomplished would please many who held a different view.

What was the principle on which Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe acted? From Madison's and Monroe's vetoes it was seen to be that the government had power to appropriate money for public works which were not local, but whose benefit was to the nation. The Maysville Road was local, and therefore he opposed it. He thus reconciled his argument with his votes in congress all of which he could defend on the ground that they looked to national benefits.

Two principal arguments were added to reconcile the people to a reversal of a policy which evidently was agreeable to them:

1. Certain revenues were pledged to pay the national debt, while congress was then in the very act of reducing duties on certain articles. Yet the demand for expenditures was great: if to the necessary expenses of government were added the appropriations for internal improvements then proposed there would be for the current year a deficit of ten millions. Thus we should have either to give up such appropriations, or abandon the payment of the debt, or increase taxes. But if the money may not be raised now, the people need not be discouraged. The intelligent American people could be trusted to carry this policy through at a time more auspicious than the present.

Let us, however, give all present efforts to extinguish the debt. How much would it not strengthen the national character in the eyes of the world to see a republic founded as an experiment, come successfully through two great wars, prosperous, free from debt, and united in its spirit! How much better was this than "a scramble for appropriations that have no relation to any general system of improvement!"

2. Assuming that congress could by the constitution construct improvements, it was certain that it could not "prosecute" them. But there was so much uncertainty as between the two rights that it was unwise to proceed further until the constitution was amended so as to make its meaning perfectly clear. If the people really desire improvements they will not fail to make such an amendment, which was particularly desirable in order to enable congress to regulate and conduct such improvements without infringing the jurisdiction of the states in which they lay. The Cumberland Road was an example of the evils under present conditions; for years the right of congress to conduct it was questioned, and sometimes funds were voted for that purpose, and sometimes they were refused. All such confusion would be avoided if the people were asked to pass on the subject by a proposed amendment.¹

Public appropriations for internal improvements have several times been considered by the American people, either in congress or in state legislatures, or in municipalities. There has usually been a well-defined consciousness of the need of such appropriations to secure desired utilities; but practical wisdom has generally halted before the evident danger of jobbery in selecting the works to be constructed or in awarding the contracts. Jackson's allusion to this danger was wise; for the people are slow to trust themselves with the supervision of so

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 483-493.

large a system of expenditures for a purpose in which selfish motives can operate so easily.

From Madison's veto to Jackson's was a period of thirteen years. Holding back internal improvements during that time was fatal to those who hoped to have them through national aid. The movement was already transferring itself to the states. Pennsylvania and the states west of it were particularly extravagant, and the results were repudiation of debt or heavy embarrassments. The Maysville veto undoubtedly turned a large part of this financial waste away from the national treasury.

The congressional elections of 1830 supported the administration, and this was taken as endorsement of the veto. The vehemence with which the opposition denounced that policy during the campaign warrants the assertion that the public had ample opportunity to repudiate it if they had so desired. Van Buren, watching the situation, feared, as he tells us, that the antipathy to improvements would go so far as to include among forbidden things such necessary works as light-houses, fortifications, and harbor improvements. He wanted to get before the public some statement of sound principles which should show what might and what might not be provided.

In order to bring up the question again in a proper way, and to make friends for his policy, he wrote to Madison, living in Virginia at the age of seventy-nine. The Maysville message assumed that Madison's veto of 1817 conceded "that the right of appropriation is not limited by the power to carry into effect the measure for which the money is asked, as was formerly contended." This, as Van Buren reveals in confidence, was a doubtful construction of the early veto, but it was used in the hope of bolstering up the argument of 1830. It was a good point on which to hang a restatement, and probably a modifi-

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 486.

cation of Jackson's position, and he desired to open a correspondence which should give him such an opportunity.

He proceeded cautiously, sending Madison, in the first place, a copy of the veto message with a simple note of personal compliment. As he expected, the eye of his correspondent fell on the questionable allusion to the message of 1817, and a protest followed. The intention of Madison's veto, said the writer of it, was "to deny to Congress as well the appropriating power, as the executing and jurisdictional branches of it," which was the general understanding at the time the veto was delivered.

The situation was now to the liking of the clever secretary. Replying at once he said that the question of internal improvements was not settled, that it would come up again in the future, and the President would be pleased to have his predecessor's opinion on four points: (1) A precise view of the government's power to appropriate money to improvements of a general nature. (2) A rule to govern appropriations for light-houses and harbor improvements. (3) The expediency of refusing internal improvements until the national debt was paid. (4) The strong objection to subscriptions by the United States for stock in private companies.

Madison's reply to the first question was less definite than his interrogator desired. It enumerated certain works on which the government might expend money, declared that discretion ought to be left to the legislature, that funds should be apportioned among the states according to population, but that there were certain objections to this. As for light-houses and harbors, that depended on whether they were local or general, and on how much a given work was local and how much it was general, and each case was to be decided on its merits. The replies to the other two points were equally indefinite: the national debt ought to be paid with all possible expediency, but some conceivable expenditures would take precedence,

each to be considered on its own merits; and the government ought sometimes to aid, and sometimes to refuse to aid private corporations. To these categorical statements he appended a general opinion that internal improvements are unconstitutional but that they are highly important when properly selected, which was but reasserting the veto of 1817.¹ Such a response could have given little comfort to Van Buren. It neither supported his contention nor contradicted it so directly as to furnish the basis for an opposing argument. By July, when the reply was written, it was evident that public opinion was so far with the veto that it was needless to say more than had been said. It was good policy to let well enough alone.

But Jackson was too practical to go to extremes. Appropriations for light-houses and harbors were continued, and funds were granted to keep in proper condition certain works already undertaken. For example, the Cumberland Road, which received before the Maysville veto total grants for \$1,668,000, received after that event during Jackson's administrations \$3,728,000.²

A year later Jackson wrote to Kendall: "I wish you to look at the Harbor Bill, and compare it with my veto message on the Maysville Road Bill, and my message to Congress in 1830. I have left in the hands of Major Donelson, Genl. Gratiot's report on the items in the bill, from which you will find that many are local and useless; few that are national. I am determined in my message, if I live to make one to Congress, to put an end to this waste of public money, and to appropriations for internal improvements, until a system be adopted by Congress and an amendment of the Constitution; in short to stop this corrupt, log-rolling system of Legislation." But harbor appropriations continued to be made after the old manner.

¹Madison, *Letters* (Edition 1884), IV., 87-93.

²Report of Colonel Albert: See Wheeler, *History of Congress*, II., 124.

The history of the Maysville message illustrates Jackson's relation to his advisers. He could not have written this message; but its significant ideas were his. He could not have planned actions so well calculated to manipulate the situation for his advantage, yet he gave intelligent approval to the plans when made by another and had the courage to carry them through. Moreover, the veto is not far beyond the clause in the draft of the first inaugural where he declared against internal improvements of a local nature. Most of his important policies are found in an undeveloped form in his earlier doctrines.

The Maysville message has an importance in the history of American politics not at first observed. It was the first distinctive measure of the Jacksonian democracy. It marked the complete union of the old Crawford group with the original Jackson men. Finally, it robbed Calhoun of a popular policy and weakened him so much that his enemies dared to proceed to destroy him utterly. How they realized their final plans in this process and the part Jackson took in it is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXIV

CALHOUN'S ISOLATION COMPLETED

By 1830 the two factions among those who voted for Jackson in 1828 were well developed. Their rivalry entered into the selection of the cabinet, the Eaton embroglio, the Maysville veto, and the ever-present hopes of the succession in 1832. It was the chief phase of public life in the early years of the administration. If an office-seeker failed to get Van Buren's support he was likely to attach himself to Calhoun, and *vice versa*. Each faction was too strong to yield to the other, and war to the end was necessary. Each was composed of politicians; for the dissension did not reach the mass of voters, who thought of Jackson only. He became the arbiter of the dispute. The last move of the Van Burenites was to excite his terrible anger against their enemy. Before its force no appeal to justice and no revelation of political intrigue was able to stand.

Jackson's friendship for Calhoun was as early as the Seminole affair, which began late in 1817, just as the latter of the two men became secretary of war. It was doubtless stimulated by his hatred of Crawford and Clay. He thought that the secretary of war supported him when the other two would censure him for invading Florida, and while on his way to Washington to defend himself in that matter he gave for toast at a dinner, "John C. Calhoun — an honest man the noblest work of God." Calhoun did not entirely deserve this confidence; for in the earliest cabinet councils on the matter he said that the leader of the Florida invasion ought to be disciplined for violating orders. Jackson knew nothing of this, and Calhoun allowed

him to remain uninformed. He seems to have been a little in awe of the fiery Tennessean.

In the campaign of 1824 Jackson favored either Calhoun or Adams before he himself was announced as a candidate. The alliance between his and Calhoun's groups was probably arranged by their respective lieutenants without much aid from the principals. Letters exchanged by the two men at infrequent intervals do not mention any such bargain. Jackson wrote with his usual directness, but Calhoun was apt to show a nervous attempt to please, as though his position was unpleasant and involuntarily taken. "I would rather have your good opinion," he wrote in 1821, "with the approbation of my own mind, than all the popularity which a pretended [?] love of the people, and a course of popularity hunting can excite." "I find few with whom I accord so fully in relation to political affairs as yourself," he wrote in 1823.¹ Calhoun was not naturally uncandid, and he must have found it hard to flatter. He was very ambitious and bowed before the Jackson wave through the hope that he might at last ride on its top. The health of the Tennessean was exceedingly bad, and he openly declared for only one term: it was a fair prospect for him who could hope for the succession. Very few letters between the two men are preserved for the period from 1824 to 1829, but all obtainable evidence shows that personal relations between them were friendly. Jackson knew of the opposition of his particular supporters to the South Carolinian, but he did not give himself to it. Party harmony was essential in the campaign and in the first months of the new administration.

Calhoun seen from a distance was a man after Jackson's own heart. He had courage, vigor, and candor; and these qualities won the Tennessean. But closer contact showed a man who was cold, correct, and intellectual, a public man of

¹Calhoun to Jackson, March 7, 1821, and March 30, 1823, Jackson Mss.

the old Virginia manners, and one who could not bend to the will of a leader. If he had won the friendship of the Tennessee group in 1825, before they gave themselves to another, his future would have been different.

The course of Duff Green was another disturbing factor. Brought from Missouri to Washington in 1826 to establish the *Daily Telegraph*, he attached himself to Calhoun's interests. He was rash, arrogant, and turbulent. He made it clear that Calhoun was to have the succession, as though he would frighten off other aspirants; and in many ways irritated the opponents of the South Carolinian. January 17, 1828, he announced Jackson and Calhoun as the republican ticket, seeking to commit the party and to defeat those members of it who at that moment were scheming to bring forward De Witt Clinton. This was borne patiently throughout the long fight against Adams and in the early years of the first administration, and he received his reward in the lion's share of the public printing; but the stronger grew the opposite faction the less willingly they gave him the position of editorial oracle. His paper reflected the change of temper: when Jackson in the winter of 1829-30 chided him for not defending the policies of the government, he replied that he was no longer informed of those policies.¹ A more facile man than Green would have been better suited to his chieftain's purposes. On the other hand, one must remember that the Jacksonian democracy was organized in Jackson's own spirit of absolute leadership. From an editor who served it military obedience was demanded. If Green would not give himself to the cause body and soul he must give place to some one who was more obedient.

It does not appear when the anti-Calhoun faction began to urge Van Buren for the succession. They concentrated on De Witt Clinton for vice-president in the winter of 1827-28 and

¹Silas Wright to Van Buren, December 9, 1828, Van Buren Mss.

had he lived he might have become a formidable antagonist of the South Carolinian. But his death in February, 1828, left the opposition headless. Many of them were for Van Buren before this, but he was not taken at once for the vacant position. He was little known in national politics, he was closely associated with Crawford whom many Jackson men hated, and he was unpopular through having the reputation of a shrewd manipulator. As a member of cabinet he commanded great respect, but he was not in 1828 the man to defeat Calhoun for second place in the administration.

You are now the "master mover" in Washington: "take care to be so." Thus wrote in substance Dr. Thomas Cooper, March 24, 1829, in recognition of Van Buren's preëminence in the cabinet. We have seen the prediction fulfilled. He not only managed his department with credit; but he saved the administration's prestige in social matters, he steered himself safely through the dangers from the "Eaton malaria," he brought the President to support the old republican view of internal improvements, and he made himself the most trusted friend of Jackson and the glorified hero of the "Kitchen Cabinet." While he thus advanced, his rival, Calhoun, was steadily falling into disfavor with the President.

The first noticeable rift in the relation between Jackson and Calhoun occurred in 1826. In that year some of Jackson's enemies criticized his defense of New Orleans, and a friendly paper in Tennessee replied with the countercharge that Monroe, then secretary of war, did not support him fairly in that military expedition. It was at this time that Jackson became involved in the controversy with secretary of the navy, Southard, over the latter's assertion that Monroe saved the New Orleans campaign from failure.¹ This touched the feelings of Monroe who undertook to refute the editor of the Tennessee newspapers.

¹See above, II., 396.

He wrote to Senator White, of that state, offering to submit documents in substantiation of his assertion that he gave all possible aid to the operations in Louisiana. White was reassured in a measure and showed the letter to Jackson, who passionately pronounced Monroe guilty of deception.

While this affair transpired some unknown hand brought Calhoun into it. Sam Houston, then a Tennessee member of congress and in full sympathy with the anti-Calhoun faction, got possession of a letter from Monroe to Calhoun, written September 9, 1818, in which the President told his secretary of war what should be done with the invader of Florida. It showed that neither of the two men approved that invasion, which was contrary to Jackson's understanding of their attitude at the time. Houston sent the letter to the "Hermitage," where the effect was decided. "It smelled so much of deception," said Jackson, "that my hair stood on end for one hour."¹ He was then warm against Monroe, which was some protection to Calhoun. He thought that the latter caused the matter to be revealed to him to show how false was the former.

It has never been explained how this letter was taken from Calhoun's possession. He was conscious that a letter had been purloined, but had no description of it until nearly a year later, when he learned that it was in Jackson's hands. The mischief-maker, who sprung the trap in February, 1827, evidently wished to leave the men most concerned without a chance to explain. Calhoun now approached White and Eaton, saying that if the letter in question was Monroe's of September 9, 1818, it was written, as he knew, with friendly intent to the general. The latter was forced to acknowledge the date of the letter, and Calhoun placed in the hands of the intermediaries a long correspondence between himself and Monroe, and those gentlemen

¹Monroe, *Writings* (Hamilton, Editor), VII., 93, 104. Jackson to H. L. White, February 7, 1827, March 30, 1828, Jackson Mss.

professed themselves satisfied.¹ They could have no object in discrediting Monroe, no longer a factor in politics, and the vice-president's reputation with Jackson had suffered the first taint, which was all that the plotters could expect at that time.

Toward Monroe the attitude of Jackson was frigidly dignified, but to the South Carolina statesman he was formal and courteous. He was, as Calhoun himself said, a man of "good sense and correct feelings, when not under excitement." He had been unwisely left in ignorance of the ancient division in the cabinet and he was naturally shocked when undeceived. While he froze toward the ex-President, he was excessively polite toward Calhoun. If the latter, so he wrote to White, claimed that the letter was stolen from him, it should be returned. Two months later he wrote directly to the vice-president in full explanation of his position in 1818, expressing himself in a restrained manner, entirely worthy of a public man.²

In the meantime, Crawford, ill enough to be put out of politics and well enough to try to mar the hopes of his old enemies, took a hand in the attack on Calhoun, whom he pronounced a burden on the ticket. White and Felix Grundy, to whom he revealed his plans, gave little heed, but he proceeded to scheme. He made up his mind that Macon, of North Carolina, ought to be vice-president and to that end wrote letters to prominent men in all the states outside of New England. He tried to get Van Buren to carry New York for Macon, but that wily leader would not range himself openly against his antagonist. Crawford was very bitter and worked unrelentingly. He asserted that if Calhoun could be defeated for second place on the ticket he could be kept out of the cabinet of the new President. "I will myself," he said, "cause representations to be made to

¹Calhoun, *Letters* (Jameson, Editor), 254. See also Calhoun to Jackson, July 10, 1828, *Jackson Mss.*

²Jackson to White, March 30, 1828; *ibid* to Calhoun, May 25, 1828, *Jackson Mss.*

General Jackson that will prevent his being taken into the cabinet of General Jackson.”¹ It seems evident also that Lacock, an opponent of Jackson, knew in 1819 of Jackson's much-discussed letter to Monroe, asking for permission to invade Florida, and it is not likely that Crawford left him in the dark in regard to other features of the situation.²

Both Crawford and Van Buren were in correspondence with Alfred Balch, who lived near Nashville and worked against the Calhoun supporters in Tennessee. The election of 1828 was hardly over when he wrote to the *New Yorker* that the two factions in the state were already organizing with an eye to the succession. Two years earlier, he said, he began to recruit for Van Buren there, and his success was remarkable. He added, “J^a appears to be well but (*entre nous*) he is wearing away rapidly. It is strange, but it is as true as holy writ, that already Jⁿ's successor is as much spoken of as Jⁿ's late success.”³

After the inauguration both sides held themselves in restraint, not wishing to embarrass the common cause; but when congress convened in December there were many opportunities for misunderstandings, and the Eaton affair as well as the rise of Van Buren in presidential confidence heightened the tendency. Calhoun was clearly losing ground and his opponents were more sure of themselves. It began to be reported that his friends would like to see the general discredited so that they would seem the most capable element of the party. Calhoun denied the charge, saying: “So far from opposing, we may appeal with confidence to the proceedings of both Houses to prove, that our support has been more uniform and effective than any other portion of congress. It is an object of ambition with

¹Crawford to Van Buren, December 21, 1827, and October 21, 1828; Van Buren to Crawford, November 14, 1828; Van Buren Mss. Crawford to White, May 27, 1827; and Grundy to Jackson, November 20, 1828; Jackson Mss.

²Parton, *Life of Jackson*, II., 553.

³Van Buren to Jackson, September 14, 1827; Balch to Van Buren, November 27, 1828; Van Buren Mss.

us to carry the General through with glory; and while we see with pain every false move, we have never permitted our feelings to be alienated for a moment. Ours is the position of honest and sincere friendship, and for us a perfect contrast to that pursued, in the quarter to which I allude.”¹

Another important fact in this connection was the rise of nullification. This movement sprang up in South Carolina without the aid of Calhoun, but in 1829 it had full possession of the state and he gave it his powerful support. From its inception it had Jackson’s opposition, as will be shown in the proper place; and it, therefore, furnished another means utilized by the surrounding circle, to turn him against the vice-president.

The spring of 1830 brought the first preparations for the coming congressional elections. With it came revived talk about the next presidential contest, and one of the matters of speculation was the possibility of Jackson’s accepting a second term. All the anti-Calhoun element desired such an event, well knowing that Van Buren could not take first place from the South Carolinian in an open field. They probably had little difficulty to induce the leader to agree with them on this point, although there is no positive evidence on the matter; and they turned themselves to the business of disposing of Calhoun. Their reliance was on the secrets of Monroe’s cabinet when it met to consider Jackson’s invasion of Florida in 1818. They proposed to create rupture between the two men and the month of May was the time when it seemed best to bring it about.

On the twelfth of that month, the very day they put the final proofs into Jackson’s hands, Calhoun wrote as follows:

My true position is to do my duty without committing myself, or assuming unnecessary responsibility, where I have no control. The times are perilous beyond any that I have ever witnessed. All of the great interests of the country are coming

¹Calhoun, *Letters* (Jameson edition), 272.

into conflict, and I must say, and with deep regret I speak it, that those to whom the vessel of state is entrusted seem either ignorant, or indifferent about the danger. My great ambition is to see our country free, united and happy, and placed where I am, I owe it as a duty to myself and country to preserve unimpaired the public confidence. Thus acting, the first step is to postpone all questions as to myself, till it becomes necessary to decide, and the one to which you refer among the others:¹ when the time comes it will present a grave question, to be decided wisely only by weighing fully considerations for and against.

I consider it perfectly uncertain, whether General Jackson will offer again or not. Some who regard their own interest more than his just fame are urging him to offer, but it will be difficult to reconcile the course to his previous declarations, unless there should be the strongest considerations of the public good to justify him.²

On the following day the writer of this letter received formal notice from the President that hostilities were begun.

What was Jackson's attitude toward Calhoun before this time? It is difficult to say, but there is strong circumstantial evidence that he was already determined to repudiate him. Lewis's position goes far to show as much. "You cannot but recollect, General," he wrote in 1839, "that before your installation into office even, I had several conversations with you upon the subject, and importance of looking to Mr. Van Buren as your successor for the same office. From that time to the day of his election I spared no pains, but exerted every honorable effort in my power to accomplish that object."³ Van Buren himself says that Jackson was against Calhoun before May, 1830, but that it was late in the same year when he first told the New Yorker that he was to be successor. Moreover, knowledge of Calhoun's position in 1818 came to Jackson gradually, and was so clearly

¹I. e., the succession.

²Calhoun, *Letters* (Jameson edition), 272.

³Lewis to Jackson, August 30, 1839, Mss. of W. C. Ford, Boston.

delayed for the critical moment that we wonder if the President could have been entirely ignorant of the earlier stages of the matter.

The story of the breach of relations, so far as can be gathered from available evidence, is as follows: Col. James A. Hamilton, of New York, old supporter of Crawford and friend of Van Buren, attended the celebration of the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, January 8, 1828. He joined General Jackson's personal party at Nashville and went down the river with them, winning the general by his ready tongue and political standing until he was taken into the bosom of the family. He became very intimate with Major Lewis, with whom he had much in common. The two men played their game so openly and persistently that they disgusted some of the general's older and more disinterested friends.¹

Hamilton offered to use his influence to bring Crawford to support Jackson and proposed to return north by way of Georgia, in order to talk with the old chieftain. He and Lewis discussed the differences between the two men, and the latter said that Jackson thought Crawford wanted to court-martial him in 1818. Jackson was approached and gave such preliminary overtures as were necessary to effect a reconciliation.

At Milledgeville, Ga., Hamilton found that Crawford was absent from home for a fortnight. Deciding not to wait, he unburdened himself to Forsyth, then governor, who undertook to see the absentee and write the result of the effort. In due time a letter came from the governor saying that Crawford was friendly and that he avowed that it was Calhoun who favored the punishment of Jackson in 1818. Hamilton kept the letter and says he told Lewis nothing about it, but it is hardly to be thought that so important a piece of in-

¹R. G. Dunlap to Jackson, August 10, 1831, Copy in Library of Congress. Also in *American Historical Magazine* (Nashville), IX., 93. Also Van Buren, *Autobiography*, IV., 27, (Library of Congress, Transcript)

formation was allowed to lie dormant in the hands of Calhoun's enemies.

April 3, 1828, Lewis, in Nashville, heard that his daughter was ill in Philadelphia, and set out the next day to visit her. He went through Washington, which, if he traveled the usual route by Pittsburg, must have been out of his way, and learned there that his daughter was better. Incidentally he met Van Buren for the first time. In Philadelphia he was completely reassured as to his daughter, "and," he adds, "as I was anxious to get back home I hurried on to New York, which, never having visited, I desired to see." There he was shown Forsyth's letter to Hamilton. He was surprised at the contents but did not mention the matter to Jackson when he returned to Tennessee. He feared that the general, whose feelings were then highly wrought up over the attacks on Mrs. Jackson, might break into some explosion which would injure his chances of election. The letter was concealed more than a year.

So far the plausible Lewis; but there is reason to suppose that the affair did not proceed quite so properly. On the boat which carried Jackson to New Orleans for the celebration of 1828 was Gen. R. G. Dunlap, old friend and a comrade in the Seminole war; and he was not a politician. He told what he saw and heard on the boat, not for publication but to Jackson himself for his information. He said that Hamilton spoke to him of his proposed visit to Georgia and continued: "He then stated that it was believed that General Jackson was to be assailed either by Mr. Adams or Mr. Monroe in relation to the affair of the Seminole War in Florida, and that some of the General's friends (stating that he and Major Lewis had talked about the matter) believed that Mr. Crawford could give evidence growing out of Mr. Monroe's Cabinet councils which would vindicate the General against such an attack." After saying this Hamilton went on to express doubt of Calhoun's loyalty to Jackson. Dunlap gave him little

comfort, saying he cared not what Calhoun felt in 1818 if he would only act fairly now. "I felt a contempt," he said to Jackson, "which I had tried to suppress for several days for the conduct of some of your suite, whom, I believed, were feeding your fears and passions with a view exclusively to fasten themselves on your kindness." He was so much chagrined that with General Smith and Colonel Martin he agreed to leave the party in New Orleans and stop at another hotel; but they were dissuaded by Houston, lest Jackson's friends should seem to be divided.¹ From this it is evident that Hamilton knew while still on the Mississippi what Crawford would say to him; and if that be true it goes far to show that the visit to Milledgeville, which plays so central a part in Lewis's general story, was a cut and dried affair to give Crawford a suitable opportunity to launch his secret on its fatal course.

But let us return to Lewis. Through most of the year 1829 Jackson was ignorant of Forsyth's letter, but in the autumn it was thought fit to bring it to his attention, and the means used were worthy of the genius of a man like Lewis. In November Monroe dined with Jackson. Lewis, Eaton, and Tench Ringgold were also present. At the table Ringgold remarked that in 1818 Monroe was the only member of the government who favored Jackson in the Seminole affair. Lewis innocently asserted that Calhoun was said to have been on that side, but the other held to his original statement. When the guests were gone Lewis and Eaton remained. Jackson called for his pipe and fell into a reverie, the two others talking between themselves as he smoked. Was Eaton not surprised, said the ingenuous Lewis, at what Ringgold said? Then the general, catching the drift of things, started up asking what Ringgold had said. Lewis told him, but Jackson said there was some mistake.

"I replied," says Lewis, "I am not sure of that."

¹Dunlap to Jackson, August 10, 1831, copy in Library of Congress.

"Why are you not?" inquired the general.

"Because I have seen a letter written eighteen months ago, in which Mr. Crawford is represented as saying that you charged him with having taken strong grounds against you in Mr. Monroe's cabinet, but in that you had done him injustice, for it was not he, but Mr. Calhoun, who was in favor of your being arrested, or punished in some other way."

Jackson now demanded to see the letter from Forsyth, and Lewis hurried to New York to get it; but Hamilton objected that it ought not to be surrendered without the consent of the writer. It was then agreed that as Hamilton and Forsyth would both be in Washington at the approaching session of congress, the matter might be left in suspense until then. But the Georgian, on his arrival, insisted that Crawford's original statement be secured, to which Jackson agreed. So says Lewis; but there is an unexplained lapse of time in the affair: congress convened on December 7th, Forsyth, who was a senator, took his seat on December 9th, the letter to Crawford was not written until April 16th following,¹ and that was the day after the celebrated Jefferson anniversary dinner.² Crawford's reply, written April 30th, reached Jackson May 12th, and it confirmed everything.

The next day, May 13th, the President enclosed the Crawford letter with a note to the vice-president inquiring frigidly if the statement was true. Calhoun acknowledged receipt instantly and promised to reply more fully in a short time. He expressed satisfaction "that the secret and mysterious attempts which have been making by false insinuations for years for political purposes, to injure my character, are at length brought to light." Calhoun had his faults: he was ambitious, unsympathetic, chary of friendship, and willing to follow the tide of popular favor where it counted in his career. He had tried to ride the

¹Calhoun Works, VI., 360.

²See below page 555.

Jackson wave, and was about to be submerged by it. In this respect we can have little sympathy for him; but as the victim of the cheap and heartless strategy by which he was now cast out of the political household he awakens our interest. Van Buren, the beneficiary of the plot, is said to have known nothing of it. It is entirely probable. It was a part of the game that he should be ignorant, and at the time he doubtless knew that he was ignorant of it; but he received the cloak of the despoiled victim and wore it in public without shame.

May 29th Calhoun's promise was fulfilled. In a letter, covering twenty-two pages of his *Works* he took up one by one the accusations of Crawford and rebutted them completely, so far as they implied treachery to Jackson. He also made it clear to any impartial man that the charges proceeded from the hatred of him who made them. "I should be blind," he continued, "not to see that this whole affair is a political maneuver, in which the design is that you should be the instrument, and myself the victim, but in which the real actors are carefully concealed by an artful movement. . . . I have too much respect for your character to suppose you capable of participating in the slightest degree in a political intrigue. Your character is of too high and generous a cast to resort to such means, either for your own advantage or that of others. This the contrivers of the plot well knew; but they hoped through your generous attributes, through your lofty and jealous regard for your character, to excite feelings through which they expected to consummate their designs. Several indications forewarned me, long since, that a blow was meditated against me."¹

The writer could not have expected to convince Jackson at this stage of the affair. Foreseeing that things tended to an exposure he was putting the case as well as possible for that purpose. It was to this end that his letter abounded in fine-

¹Calhoun, *Works*, VI., 362.

spun arguments from which, in fact, he never could escape. They convinced nobody, and the severe terms in which he arraigned the plotters, though well deserved, were futile, both as to Jackson and as to the public. He would have done better to admit his original position in 1818, and to have shown that what he did was in accordance with his sense of duty and without intention of injuring the general. That he had allowed Jackson to remain undeceived through these years was the weak side of his position, and his failure to deal with it gave the latter an opportunity to reply with good effect.

I had been told, said the President in substance, that it was you and not Crawford who in 1818 tried to destroy my reputation. I repelled the charge with indignation "upon the ground that you, in all your letters to me, professed to be my personal friend, and approved *entirely* my conduct in relation to the Seminole campaign. . . . I had a right to believe that you were my friend, and, until now, never expected to have occasion to say of you, in the language of Cæsar, *Et tu, Brutel!*"¹ The communication closed with an intimation that the affair would be laid before the public at the proper time.

Now followed a warm correspondence between Jackson, Calhoun, and Forsyth, extending through the summer. The President at last closed it, leaving "you and Mr. Crawford and all concerned to settle this affair in your own way." Calhoun, irritated by this summary dismissal, threw aside all semblance of deference and wrote a scathing denunciation of the whole intrigue. Why should Jackson, he asked, who boasted of his fairness have turned to Crawford, the writer's bitterest enemy, to know what transpired in Monroe's cabinet? The letter was not answered, but endorsed on it in the great slanting handwriting of the President one reads: "This is full evidence of

¹C. Crocker to Scott, March 16, 1826, as follows, "But it was in the spirit of *Et tu, Brute!*"—Lockhart, *Life of Scott* (Riverside edition), VIII., 48.

the duplicity and insincerity of the man and displays a littleness and entire want of those high, dignified, and honorable feelings which I once thought he possessed.”¹

While this correspondence progressed Calhoun received a biting letter from Crawford, with the information that a copy was sent to Jackson also. Its character is indicated by some extracts. “I make no doubt,” said the writer of it, “that you would have been very glad to be spared the trouble of making so elaborate a comment upon a letter of three pages. I make no doubt that you dislike the idea of being exposed and stripped of the covert you have been enjoying under the President’s wings by means of falsehood and misrepresentation.” And again: “A man who knows, as I well do, the small weight which any assertion of yours is entitled to in a matter where your interests lead you to disregard the truth, must have other evidence than your assertion to remove even a suspicion.” And finally this: “From the time you established the *Washington Republican* for the purpose of slandering and vilifying my reputation, I considered you a degraded and disgraced man, for whom no man of honor and character could feel any other than the most sovereign contempt. Under this impression I was anxious that you should be no longer vice-president of the United States.”² The venom of this letter ought to have discredited Crawford as a witness with any fair minded man.

This controversy showed Jackson and his immediate supporters that it was necessary to have another organ than Green’s *Telegraph*. Of the latter he said: “The truth is, he has professed to me to be heart and soul against the Bank, but his idol controls him as much as the shewman does his puppets, and we must get another organ to announce the policy, and defend the

¹Calhoun to Jackson, August 25, 1830, Jackson Mss. See also Calhoun, *Works*, VI., 400.

²Crawford to Calhoun, October 2, 1830, Jackson Mss. See also Shipp, *Giant Days, or the Life and Times of W. H. Crawford*, 238.

administration, in his hands it is more injured than by all the opposition.”¹ Looking around for an editor he hit upon F. B. Blair, formerly a Clay supporter in Kentucky, who had become an advocate of “relief” and “new court” policies, and as such defended Jackson in 1828. Blair was deeply hostile to the Bank of the United States. He was a friend of Kendall, who now urged that he be brought to Washington. He accepted the proposition made to him and on December 7, 1830, brought out the first number of the *Globe*, destined to be the most influential American newspaper of this time. He began without capital, but the administration used its influence and soon got him two thousand subscribers to which was added a share of the public printing. He made an admirable partisan editor. His style was forceful, biting, and uncompromising. Jackson found in him a kindred Western spirit entirely at his service. When Jackson desired to lay a matter before the public he would exclaim, “Send it to Bla-ar,” pronouncing the word in the old North-of-Ireland way. Blair, for his part, admired Jackson greatly and with sincerity. From his letters we have interesting glimpses of the President, one of which is as follows:

It is a great mistake to suppose that Old Hickory is in leading-strings, as the coalition say. I can tell you that he is as much superior here as he was with our generals during the war. He is a man of admirable judgment. I have seen proof of it in the direction which he has given to affairs this winter, in which I know he has differed from his advisers. . . . He is fighting a great political battle, and you will find that he will vanquish those who contend with him now as he has always done his private or the public enemies.’

Van Buren has long been supposed to have brought on the attack on his rival. Lewis says that neither the secretary of state nor himself played such a part, but that it came about as

¹Jackson to Lewis, June 26, 1830, Mss. New York Public Library.

²*Atlantic Monthly*, LX., 187.

an accident. But it must have been taken with full knowledge of the supporters of the man from New York. When Calhoun's first long statement was received, the letter of May 29th, Jackson was in a violent temper and sent the communication to Van Buren for his opinion of it. The latter read the first page and handed it back to the messenger remarking that it would probably produce a rupture with the President and that it would be better if he, the secretary, could say that he knew nothing of it. When it was returned Jackson asked what his favorite thought of it.

"Mr. Van Buren," said Lewis, "thinks it best for him that he should not read it," and he gave reasons for the opinion. The general smiled and said: "I reckon Van is right. I dare say they will attempt to throw the whole blame upon him."

Long afterward, when the heat of the controversy was past, and Calhoun and Van Buren had gone through the formality of reconciliation, Jackson sent the latter the following statement:

Hermitage, July 31, 1840

DEAR SIR:

It was my intention as soon as I heard that Mr. Calhoun had expressed his approbation of the leading measures of your administration and had paid a visit to you, to place in your possession the statement which I shall now make, but bad health and the pressure of other business have constantly led me to postpone it. What I have reference to is the imputation which has some times been thrown upon you, that you had an agency in producing a controversy which took place between Mr. Calhoun and myself in consequence of Mr. Crawford's disclosure of what occurred in the cabinet of Mr. Monroe relative to my military operations in Florida during his administration. Mr. Calhoun is doubtless already satisfied that he did you injustice in holding you in the slightest degree responsible for the course I pursued on that occasion; but as there may be others who may

¹For Lewis' narrative, see Parton, *Jackson*, III., 310-330.

be still disposed to do you injustice; and who may hereafter use the circumstance for the purpose of impugning both your character and his, I think it my duty to place in your possession the following sympathetic declaration, viz., *That I am not aware of your ever saying a word to me relative to Mr. Calhoun which had a tendency to create an interruption of my friendly relations with him — that you were not consulted by me in any stage of the correspondence on the subject of his conduct in the cabinet of Mr. Monroe, and that after this correspondence became public the only sentiment you ever expressed to me about it was that of deep regret that it should have occurred.*

You are at liberty to show this letter to Mr. Calhoun, and make any other use of it you may think proper for the purpose of correcting the erroneous impressions which have prevailed on the subject.¹

This statement was in keeping with Jackson's generosity toward a friend. It was supported by Van Buren's own assertion in his unpublished autobiography. He was too wise a political manager to become involved in a quarrel which related so closely to himself, and which must inevitably be made public.

With the end of this correspondence late in the summer of 1830, there was a lull in the controversy. Calhoun busied himself in getting letters from other members of Monroe's cabinet of 1818, all of whom, except Crawford, gave evidence to support him. Monroe himself made a statement to the same purport. Even R. M. Johnson, a friend of Jackson, gave assurance that in 1819 Calhoun in reference to the invasion of Florida "always spoke of you (Jackson) with respect and kindness."² All this was in anticipation of publication, but each side hesitated to commit itself to the public. Each desired the advantage of being able to pronounce the other the aggressor, and, therefore, the disturber of party harmony.

The administration felt that it was not a time for dissension

¹Van Buren Mss.

²R. M. Johnson to Jackson, February 13, 1831, Jackson Mss.

in the household. Clay was rallying his friends and joining to them the friends of the bank and internal improvements. Nothing must be done before the November elections, and their results were not so overwhelming that opposition could be ignored. Calhoun undoubtedly underestimated his difficulties. He did not realize how much he was hampered by nullification. It turned from him the great body of Northern sentiment at a time when he needed all his strength. He took the hesitation of the administration for weakness and believed that he could blast Van Buren by showing what a nefarious scheme had been concocted: January 13, 1831, he wrote:

The correspondence between the President and myself begins to excite much attention and speculation. I arrived here [Washington] before New Year's day some three, or four days, and as I did not attend on that occasion, it confirmed the rumours already in circulation of a separation between us. Mr. Crawford's correspondence with Mr. Adams and Mr. Crowsinshield placed the opponents of the administration in possession of the knowledge of the correspondence between us, and their policy has been to force it out. As far as I am concerned, it would be desirable, but as I have acted on the defensive thus far and intend to do so throughout, I will not publish unless it should become absolutely necessary. In the meantime, I permit whatever friend desires to read the correspondence, which has given a pretty general knowledge of its contents here. The result has been, in the opinion of all my friends, to strengthen me, and to weaken those who have got up the conspiracy for my destruction. Every opening was made for me to renew my intercourse with the President, which I have declined, and will continue so to do, till he retracts what he has done. His friends are much alarmed.

To another he wrote: "Those who commenced the affair are heartily sick of it."

Van Buren corroborates to a certain extent this view of the situation. He admits that about the beginning of the year

¹Calhoun, *Letters* (Jameson edition), 279, 283.

overtures for reconciliation between Jackson and the vice-president were made and nearly succeeded, and that if they had not failed the South Carolinian would have reached the goal of his ambition.¹ Failure came because Calhoun was too eager to strike Van Buren behind the President's cloak. His friends, and probably some others, flattered him that by exposing the intrigue he could destroy the chances of the secretary of state. They believed the latter a shrewd upstart, who had no weapon but trickery, and that this would be ineffective if the people could see how it worked. They forgot, if they ever knew, Jackson's power of friendship.

Calhoun even fancied that the publication could be directed so pointedly toward his rival that Jackson would be indifferent about it. With that object in mind he submitted to Eaton the long pamphlet he had prepared and asked this confidential friend of the President to remove before publication all points which would be personally disagreeable to the chief. Eaton promised to submit the manuscript to Jackson, but he failed to do so and returned it without saying the President did not see it. No corrections had been made in the text, and Calhoun, believing that there was plain sailing ahead, with the aid of Duff Green, proceeded with the plans for publication. February 15th, by way of preparing the public, Green published in the *Telegraph* a number of extracts from Van Buren papers, the purport of which was to bring out their candidate for the presidency in case Jackson declined to run. This was to show that the Van Buren faction had introduced discord into the party. Two days later the complete pamphlet was given to the world.²

Jackson prepared a reply but on consideration decided not to publish it. He felt, says Benton, that it was not becoming for a President of the United States to become a party to a

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, IV., 33-37 (Transcripts).

²*Telegraph*, February 15 and 17, 1831: See also Niles, *Register*, XL., 11, and Calhoun, *Works*, VI., 340-445.

newspaper controversy. The defense remained unpublished for over twenty years and was at last incorporated with certain omissions in Benton's *View*.¹

Calhoun's disillusionment was rapid. The administration party showed eager hostility and ranged itself on the side of Van Buren. Blair's newly established *Globe* gave the pace for a hundred other newspapers. "Mr. Calhoun's publication," it said after reviewing the events which preceded its publication, "therefore, was wholly uncalled for. It is a firebrand wantonly thrown into the Republican party. Mr. Calhoun will be held responsible for all the mischief which may follow."² In a short time the whole country rang with the conflict, and all hope of peaceful relations between President and vice-president was destroyed.

Fighting for life, Calhoun set about to organize his group to break the power of Van Buren, safely ensconced under the wing of the popular idol. "He came in like a mercenary," said Duff Green of the secretary of state, "and having divided the spoils among his followers he seems resolved to expel the native troops from the camp. I will expose him."³ A movement was launched to unite all opponents of the secretary of state. The old Clinton faction of New York was approached and gave assurances of support; the dissatisfied Virginians offered another body of recruits and arrangements were made to establish a newspaper to sustain them under the editorship of R. H. Crallé; in Pennsylvania Calhoun counted on Ingham, already alienated from Jackson and about to resume through the dissolution of the cabinet his former position as state leader;⁴ and in the South he had a strong following among those who resented the high

¹Benton, *View*, I., 167.

²*Globe*, February 21, 1831.

³Duff Green to Cabell and Co., April 16, 1831, Green's letters, Library of Congress.

⁴Duff Green to "Cabell Esquire," June 21, 1831. Duff Green's letters to Crallé and others in the Library of Congress throw much light on the Calhoun movement from 1831 to 1836.

tariff. His efforts were expended within the party with the object of defeating the nomination of Van Buren in 1832, for either first or second place on the ticket.

All this aroused Jackson. He came out openly for his favorite, consenting to take reëlection as a means of carrying through his policy. Leading his well-organized party, he attacked every show of opposition with the ardor of a military man, and the people followed him tumultuously. In the face of such a force the insurgents could do nothing. Calhoun was isolated. Broken and desperate he became a sectional leader, but it was not until Jackson's hand relaxed its grasp on the democratic party that he again became an important factor in national politics.

XXV

THE CABINET DISSOLVED

THE reorganization of the cabinet followed hard on the rupture with Calhoun. It was a shrewd move in the interest of Van Buren, and the evidence seems to show that it did not originate with Jackson. It removed Calhoun men from the cabinet, eliminated the disturbing Eaton affair, weakened the criticism of the new favorite for the succession, assured a united cabinet, and placed the anti-Calhoun faction at the head of the party. It completed the evolution of the Jacksonian organization which was about to establish a rigid control of public affairs.

Calhoun's pamphlet produced a powerful effect. Intelligent men who were not biased by party feeling could not but see the intrigue which had been used, and politicians feared the results. In Richmond, Va., his friends were very active and proposed to give him a dinner on his return from Washington, but by the greatest effort, the opposing faction was able to prevent it on the ground that party harmony ought to be preserved. The action of Virginia in this crisis would have exerted much influence in other states, and each faction was anxious to control it.

Friends in Richmond kept Van Buren informed of the situation there. "In my opinion," wrote Archer on March 12th, "nothing can restore the administration to popularity but a thorough reorganization of the cabinet. This cannot in my judgment be done till after the next election. The government is too much weakened to give any more local disgusts. This hazard can't be run now. At another time it must be accom-

plished, and what will be the greatest obstruction, I fear, Mr. Eaton (toward whom as you know, I have personally a kind feeling), must be induced to accept some honorary form of retirement." It was a fortnight after he received this letter before Van Buren, by his own account, decided to resign. Three weeks after it was written Andrew Stevenson wrote: "We shall probably have *war to the knife*, and shall lose some of our forces."¹

By this time, many party leaders realized the burden of carrying Eaton. They also knew how hopeless it was to expect Jackson to repudiate him. One day on Pennsylvania Avenue, General Overton, a close friend of Jackson, met Major Bradford, another friend of the President. Both were Tennesseans. "Bradford," said he, "there must be a change in the cabinet or we cannot get along."

"Change! What change, sir, do you mean?"

"I mean, sir, that Major Eaton must be removed."

Overton added that over one hundred congressmen would go home dissatisfied, unless something was done. Bradford replied, "If the whole country were in a body to press Andrew Jackson to this act they would not succeed without showing better cause than, as yet, is known."

"Well, sir," replied Overton, "it will be tried, for there is to be a meeting for that very purpose very soon."

Bradford consulted Barry who was much concerned at the news and by his advice Jackson was approached.

"After I had made my communication," says Bradford, "he [Jackson], instantly raised himself to the height of his noble stature and with eyes lighted up with feeling and determination, he uttered these words: 'Let them come — let the whole hundred come on — I would resign the Presidency or lose my life sooner than I would desert my friend Eaton or be forced to

¹W. S. Archer to Van Buren, March 12 and 27, 1831; A. Stevenson to Van Buren, April 4, 1831; Van Buren Mss.

do an act that my conscience may disapprove. I shall send for General Overton to-morrow and sift this affair to the bottom.'"¹ Thus there was small hope for Eaton's dismissal: we shall see that by skilful maneuvering he was brought to resign.

Van Buren's interests coincided with the desire for a new cabinet. By getting out he would relieve himself from the charge of directing the government in his own behalf, he would suffer no loss but rather gain strength with Jackson, who would now regard him as a generous and self-denying man, and he would remove himself from what might be an unpleasant storm centre. He considered the matter carefully and decided to withdraw. He resolved, as he says, to broach the matter to Jackson on one of their daily rides, but time after time as he thought to speak his courage failed and he deferred the matter. His son, who knew his father's resolve chaffed him privately for these postponements. Finally, one day, as President and secretary rode through Georgetown into the Tenallytown road, the latter found opportunity to declare his purpose.

In their general conversation, Jackson referred to the discord in his councils and said that he had hopes of peace. "No, General," said the other, "there is but one thing can give you peace." "What is that, sir?" said Jackson quickly. "My resignation." "Never, sir," exclaimed the general: "even you know little of Andrew Jackson if you suppose him capable of consenting to such a humiliation of his friends by his enemies!"

It took four days, says Van Buren in his circumstantial account of the affair, to convince the old man of the wisdom of the proposed action. What arguments were used we are not told, but in a long ride that took them beyond their usual turning point at the Tenallytown gate, he was at last brought over. It was then that the President suggested the English mission for his companion.

¹Major Samuel Bradford to Jackson, February 28, 1832, Jackson Mss.

Next morning Van Buren was early at the White House. Jackson was much agitated and said with his usual directness that it was his custom to release from association with him any man who felt that he ought to go, and that he would accordingly let his secretary follow his desires. This, says the latter, was precisely the turn he had most feared: his request, after a night's reflection, was construed as indicating a wish to leave an unpopular association. With much warmth and unfeigned concern the secretary withdrew all he had said and declared he would keep his place until dismissed. This earnestness and evident candor touched the old man's heart and complete harmony was restored.

During the afternoon of the same day, they again rode horseback. It was now agreed that the matter might be discussed with Barry, Eaton and Lewis; and the next night, the five men dined together at Van Buren's house. Up to this point Van Buren's resignation only was under discussion. Nothing had been said about Eaton's, but the whole drift of the argument must have pointed to that as a logical outcome of the situation. Eaton was thus forced to take a position, and in the night's conversation he said that inasmuch as he was the original cause of the entanglement, he also would withdraw in the interest of harmony. Van Buren then asked what Mrs. Eaton would say of this and her husband replied that she would gladly consent. The matter was definitely determined at this meeting, and next evening the party assembled again, Eaton reporting that his wife approved of the proposed arrangement. Her compliance could hardly have been hearty, however; for when a few days later Jackson and Van Buren on one of their strolls, made her a visit, their "reception was to the last degree formal and cold." When the secretary alluded to this, Jackson only shrugged his shoulder and said it was strange. After Eaton's announcement at the meeting referred to, it was agreed that

both men should resign in writing and that the letter from the secretary of war should be dated earlier than the other.¹

Eaton's letter had date of April 7th, and Van Buren's, April 11th, but they were not announced in the *Globe* until April 20th, when Van Buren's note and Jackson's reply were given in full. Eaton's gave a desire to retire to private life as the ground on which it rested, but his friend's was more delicately drawn. Alluding in guarded terms to the charge that he was aiming at the presidency, the writer declared that he sought only to relieve the President from such false imputations, and that he would have done this sooner had not public business which was just completed, made it necessary to remain in office. The matter referred to was negotiations with England and France, two complicated affairs, which were just completed with credit and success. Jackson accepted these resignations in two courteous notes, which left no doubt that he parted with the men in the most friendly spirit.²

It was not a great sacrifice on the part of either of the two men. In reorganizing the cabinet, McLane, by the arrangement made, would return from London and Van Buren would have the vacant place. Eaton, it was expected, could be made a senator from Tennessee, and he would thus be able to continue his struggle against his Washington foes without seeming to retreat before them.

The public knew little of what was going on behind the scenes and the first intimations of resignations caused friends of the two secretaries, to think them out of favor with the President. Van Buren's supporters in New York were in consternation until he sent a letter to Butler, his old law partner, with specific reassurances. His retirement, it said, was of his own initiative and would not have been allowed by the President, "if he had

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, IV., 82-92.

²Parton, *Life of Jackson*, III., 317-352.

not been satisfied by me that it was called for by the public interest and could not be ultimately prejudicial to me." It closed by suggesting that his friends be given an intimation of the true state of affairs and by hinting that other resignations would follow.¹

Virginia also gave the outgoing secretary of state much anxiety. He wrote a precautionary letter to Ritchie, editor of the Richmond *Enquirer*, and completely won that variable personage. A reassuring reply came quickly, one feature of which was an injunction not to take an office by way of substitute for the surrendered secretaryship. This was in order that the very suspicion of collusion should be avoided. Two weeks later, when it was known that Van Buren was to be minister to London, the Richmond editor took the opposite point of view, writing a long argument to show that it was Van Buren's duty to take the proffered appointment. The squirming of poor Ritchie is one of the pathetic things in the process by which Virginia was shorn of her political prestige, and it was likewise a partial cause of that disaster.²

These efforts were seconded by Jackson, who made one of his visits to the Rip Raps, in Hampton Roads, in the early summer of 1831. He received calls from many Virginians and talked freely of the situation. To the visitors he affirmed his undiminished confidence in the New Yorker. In fact, from now on he made no secret of his wishes in regard to his favorite.³

The withdrawal of two cabinet members gave opportunity to dismiss the others. They came in as a unit, said Jackson, and they should go out as a unit. The assertion was not true, but it served the purpose of him who made it; and there was undoubtedly truth in the notion that the President ought to have a harmonious council. Accordingly, April 19th he informed

¹Van Buren to B. F. Butler, April 16, and B. F. Butler to Van Buren, April 22, 1831; Van Buren Mss.

²Ritchie to Van Buren (no date, about April 22), and April 30, 1831; Van Buren Mss.

³Jackson to Van Buren. July 11, 1831; Van Buren Mss.

Ingham and Branch of the retirement of their colleagues and intimated that he would be pleased to reorganize the cabinet. They resigned promptly and with as much good temper as could be expected under the circumstances. Berrien was absent on public business. On his return Jackson expressed his wishes in a conversation and a letter of resignation was immediately sent, June 19, 1831. Barry, postmaster-general, was allowed to remain in office. He was a weak man and neither side considered his presence important.

The formal dignity with which the secretaries retired was not to last long. Early in May, Duff Green in the *Telegraph* began to refer pointedly to Mrs. Eaton, going so far as to say that Ingham, Branch, and Berrien refused to receive her. As neither of these gentlemen denied the assertion Eaton took it for acquiescence in the charge. If no cloud had been cast on the lady's fame, his conduct would have been natural, but in view of the Washington gossip for nearly two years past, the husband expected too much. He was wildly angry and in a note asked Ingham if he approved Green's assertion. His former colleague replied contemptuously: "You must be a little deranged, to imagine that any bluster of yours could induce me to disavow what all the inhabitants of this city know, and perhaps half the people of the United States believe to be true." This reply doubtless relieved its author's pent-up feelings, but it was rude and unnecessary. Eaton followed it by a demand for "satisfaction," but the other only belittled the demand. Then the Tennessean sent a note in a tone of lofty bluster in which his feelings found their highest expression in the assertion that his adversary was a coward.¹

Ingham was now handing over the keys of office, which he had retained in order to complete some unfinished work in establishing a system of standard measurements, and he was on

¹Parton, *Life of Jackson*, III., 365.

the point of leaving Washington. It was Saturday, June 18th, that the report was concluded, and on that day he sent his reply to Eaton's first note. Hurrying his preparations for departure while he ignored the second note seemed, therefore, to give color to the opinion that he was running away from the quarrel. Eaton was bent on having an encounter and on the same Saturday vacated the war office, which he had retained temporarily. Dr. P. G. Randolph, husband of Mrs. Eaton's sister, was placed temporarily in charge. Next morning he intruded himself into Ingham's private apartments and inquired if the latter intended to answer the challenge which had been sent. Ingham replied that he would answer when he saw fit, and Randolph announced that if an acceptance were not received, Eaton would take prompt measures to redress his wrongs. For this the visitor was shown the door.¹

Next day, Monday, Ingham gave up his office, sent Eaton a contemptuous reply to the challenge, and prepared to leave the city. During the morning he made some calls on friends, and when he returned home at one o'clock learned that Eaton had inquired for him at the treasury department and had subsequently spent much of the forenoon at a grocery store from which Ingham's residence could be watched. He was also told that Eaton, Randolph, Major Lewis, J. W. Campbell and others had been seen together as though they were united to carry out some design. He concluded that his life was in danger and armed himself, but when he later went out with friends to the treasury department, he was not molested. In the afternoon Eaton was seen to walk several times past the house, as though he were looking for Ingham.

All this the retiring secretary of the treasury construed as a conspiracy. He remained at home on Tuesday and at four o'clock Wednesday morning set out for Baltimore. Before he

¹Niles, *Register*, XL., 327, 331, 367.

went he sent Jackson a silly letter charging a conspiracy to assassinate him, the writer. If he believed what he wrote, his duty was to have made his charge before the police authorities and to have remained in town as a witness. The complaint was referred by Jackson to the parties implicated. They all denied concerted action, but Eaton admitted that acting for himself alone he had sought an encounter with Ingham in order to redress his wrongs. Thus passed the "assassination" of Ingham, except as it was used by the newspapers for political effect.¹ It created a great deal of talk, and ten days later it was the chief object of conversation at Quincy, Mass., where Adams remarked to a caller from the South that he thought Eaton did right and was much persecuted in his relations with the cabinet members, but that he ought to have retired without making an issue of his wife's character before the American people.²

General Coffee's opinion of the affair is also interesting. This old companion in arms of Jackson was in retirement but kept a close eye on all that touched his old friend and commander. The Washington troubles gave him much concern and he relieved his mind in a confidential letter to Jackson. Eaton's position, he said, was proper but the time was badly chosen. It might add serious embarrassment to the administration. "At suitable seasons," he continued, "I expect he will go the whole hog round." Let him be patient; a favorable opportunity would undoubtedly occur when a meeting could be made to "come on by accident."³

Dissolving the cabinet gave joy to the opposition. What could these wholesale resignations mean? said their press with affected simplicity. They were, replied the *Globe*, purely political and not mysterious, a necessary step to preserve the equilibrium of factions within the party. The discreet silence which

¹Niles, *Register* XL., 302, 331.

²Massachusetts Historical Society *Proceedings*, XLIII., 73.

³Coffee to Jackson, July 9, 1831; Jackson Mss.

the outgoing cabinet members preserved supported this view; but men who knew the situation best believed that something was behind the scene. The *Telegraph*, whose editor, said General Coffee ought to be challenged for a duel, also knew the secret, and his remarks concerning the administration were very bitter. Ingham's friends in Pennsylvania followed the lead of the *Telegraph*. The opposition seized on every intimation of a rupture in the councils of their enemies and sought to widen the breach. The blustering of Eaton against Ingham was particularly interesting to them, and Niles, in full sympathy with their side, continually reminded his readers that it was all very significant. At this time Branch and Berrien began to talk, and it was about the interview in January, 1830, in which Jackson tried to induce the cabinet members to drop the discriminations against Mrs. Eaton.¹

To Duff Green belongs the credit of prying open this phase of the controversy. He charged Jackson with saying that the cabinet should receive Mrs. Eaton or lose their places. Blair, coming to the aid of the President, demanded proof. Green gave none, but it became known that Berrien would substantiate the charge. Blair then turned on Berrien, who at length published a statement in which he asserted that the President in the interview referred to, made the recognition of Mrs. Eaton the condition on which he, Branch, and Ingham should remain in the cabinet, and he denied that Jackson in that interview read from a written statement or other paper.² Ingham and Branch corroborated the statement in formal notes,³ evidence not to be reconciled with a memorandum, several copies of which exist in Jackson's handwriting, but which was then unpublished.

The President observed the controversy with great interest, and although Ingham and Berrien made more than one effort to draw some explosion of temper from him in regard to it, he

¹See above, II., page 467.

²Niles, *Register*, XL., 381-384.

³Jackson to Van Buren, July 11, 1831, Van Buren Mss.

remained discreetly silent. So far as he was concerned, the dissolution of the cabinet was accomplished peacefully. He ignored the outbreak of temper between Eaton and Ingham, and when the latter referred the alleged conspiracy to him he acted with becoming fairness. To the published statement of Berrien, he also offered a dignified appearance. But inwardly he was deeply agitated.

At first Calhoun was the object of his temper. Berrien, he said, July 11th, was going out like a gentleman, but the vice-president was continuing "his old course of secrete writing and slandering me. I have a few extracts from his letters sent to me, which in due time, will aid *in finishing a picture I mean to draw of him!*" If this intention refers to his formal reply, we know that its publication was wisely deferred.¹ A fortnight later, when the *Globe's* caustic attacks brought Berrien into the controversy, Jackson changed his mind about that gentleman. But his greatest scorn was reserved for Ingham; and when that person published a letter to him before it had time to arrive, he caused a secretary to write a frigid reply refusing to receive further communications. The secretary's letter was promptly published in the *Globe*.²

The autumn after Eaton left office, he visited Tennessee. The Jackson party there exerted themselves with great success to make his reception brilliant. Every lady in Nashville except Mrs. Dr. McNairy, so wrote Judge Overton, called on Mrs. Eaton; and fifty-four out of the sixty-nine members of the legislature attended a dinner to Eaton. Branch was then traveling in Tennessee and arrived at Nashville at just this unlucky moment. "He reached Nashville the evening of the dinner," writes Jackson to Van Buren, "and, on the next day went to the Assembly room, where Mr. Bell and Major Eaton were by invitation, and after remaining in the *lobby* for some time with-

¹See above, II., 517.

²N. P. Trist to Ingham, see the *Globe*, July 11, 1831.

out any attention being paid to him, he retired. He doubtless exclaimed in his anguish 'Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness,' as he now discovers his sad mistake in supposing that he, Ingham, Berrien, Calhoun, Duff Green & Co., could raise up and crush whom they pleased at pleasure, and destroy me by prostrating Eaton and yourself. Those men have fallen unwept, unhonored and unsung. . . I fear them not, nor need you. You are gaining strength daily in the nation and will continue to do so, and rise in public estimation in opposition to all their intrigues to prevent it. Your enemies might as well attempt to change the running of the water in the Mississippi, as to prevent you from obtaining the increased confidence of the people."¹

His personal affection for the favorite came out in many little touches. July 23rd, when the controversy was warmest, he hung a picture of his friend in his own apartment. "It appears to look and smile upon me as I write," he said.² And two days later he wrote; "Let me hear from you, and any idea that may occur to you worthy to be presented to Congress, suggest it to me."³ To Dunlap he wrote: "I never acted with a more frank and candid man than Mr. Van Buren.—It is said that he is a great magician—I believe it, but his only wand is good common sense which he uses for the benefit of his country."⁴ To Judge White, he wrote: "I say to you frankly, that Van Buren is one of the most frank men I ever knew, with talents combined with common sense, but rarely to be met with—a *true man* with no guile."

In the meantime, the guileless Van Buren succeeded in keeping himself untouched by the prevailing controversies. He left the country late in the summer. He wrote frequent letters to Jackson, but he has kept the historian as much at sea as his

¹Jackson to Van Buren, November 14, 1831, Van Buren Mss.

²Jackson to Van Buren, July 23, 1831, Van Buren Mss.

³*Ibid* to *Ibid*, July 25, 1831; Van Buren Mss.

⁴Jackson to Dunlap, July 18, 1831, copy in Library of Congress. Jackson to White, April 9, 1831, Jackson Mss.

contemporaries. Later in life he asked Jackson to return his letters, and the old man with accustomed sincerity complied without retaining copies. Van Buren gave as the ground for his request the desire to use them in his autobiography; but the completed manuscript of that work contains few references to the letters to Jackson.

But Jackson's confidence in his friend was not misplaced. Van Buren was by far the wisest and coolest head among those who conducted the administration. He was always restrained, always master of his tongue and pen, suggesting more than he said, and careful to leave no positive impressions on others which might embarrass him in the future. In success and defeat he remained true to the old chieftain. Beneath the cool exterior of the one was the capacity to understand the genuine qualities which lay beneath the crude and turbulent nature of the others.

Many of Van Buren's friends were opposed to the appointment to England. They feared he would lose control of the situation through absence. His judgment was to the contrary: he believed his influence at the White House was strong enough to withstand absence. In fact he had the assurance of Jackson himself that all his power would be exerted to make the New Yorker the next President. Moreover, it was evident that by going abroad, he would lessen the strength of his opponent's argument that he was the shrewd manipulator of the President and those who controlled the party machinery. When in the following winter his short-sighted foes defeated his nomination in the senate, he became a martyr in the eyes of his party and it was now a point of honor to carry him through the democratic nominating convention. Up to that time, his nomination in 1832 seems not to have been a part of the plan arranged by the inner circle in Washington.

The work of filling the cabinet vacancies was taken up in connection with the task of getting rid of the former incumbents, Van

Buren remaining in Washington to assist. At Jackson's suggestion, he wrote on April 9th to Edward Livingston. "The President," he said, "wants you to come here at once and to manage so that your destination is unknown; and he will judge of your fitness for the duty he has in view by the secrecy and promptness with which you execute this request."¹ The communication was essentially a military order, and the recipient obeyed with alacrity. He was now out of debt and willing to exchange his seat in the senate for the first position in the cabinet. He was a nationalist in his views and his appointment was unpopular with the strict constructionists of New York and Virginia; but, as Ritchie said, they did not complain since Jackson asserted that he would "give the rule" and that it would be the part of the secretaries to execute his views.²

Filling Eaton's place was more difficult. The plan had been that H. L. White should resign his seat in the senate to take the war department and that Eaton should have the vacant senatorship. Although Van Buren suggested White for a place,³ Jackson himself assumed the task of inducing the Tennessee senator to comply with the first phase of the plan. April 9th, the day Van Buren summoned Livingston, he himself wrote White in a far less commanding tone. The letter gives such an intimate view of Jackson's mind at this time that it is well worth publishing in its entirety. It runs:

Strictly confidential.

Washington, April 9th, 1831⁴

My Dr. Sir

When first elected President of the United States, my first concern was to select a cabinet of honest talented men, and good republicans, amongst whom, I might have one, from personal acquaintance, I could with safety confide You and Major

¹Van Buren Mss.

²Niles, *Register*, XL., 169.

³Van Buren, *Autobiography*, III., 4; Van Buren Mss.

Eaton were the only men with whom, I had such acquaintance and intimacy that ensured me my entire confidence were well placed (and who could be tho't of to fill such a place), one of whom I tho't it necessary for the success of my administration, should be in my Cabinet. Both of you had taken a prominent share in my election, which drew me from my chosen retirement, I therefore thought I had claims upon you to aid me in the administration of the government. With these feelings, on the close of the election in 1828, I addressed you, asking you to come into my Cabinet, and requesting if anything of an imperious nature should deprive me of your services, make your determination known to Maj. Eaton, as I calculated that one or the other of you would.

When I reached Washington, for reasons which you assigned as imperious, you declined, and it was with great reluctance and much difficulty, and persuasion, Maj. Eaton consented. He has made known to me his intention to withdraw, and has tendered his resignation. It is with the greatest reluctance I part with him, but *his decision is final*. You know the confidence I have in him, but knowing how much he has unjustly suffered I cannot longer detain him contrary to his wishes and to his happiness. He has been cruelly persecuted, and from a combination of sources, that until lately, some of them I did not suspect.

I have in my reply to Major Eaton's letter of resignation, closed mine thus, "I will avail myself of the earliest opportunity to obtain some qualified friend to succeed you, and until then I must solicit that the acceptance of your resignation may be deferred." I have therefore a right to claim your aid as my faithful friend, Eaton has determined to retire. The reasons that influenced your determination in 1829, does not now exist. It is true you have drank the cup of bitterness to the dregs, your bereavements have been great — with me you can live (I have a large room for you) who can sympathize with your sufferings, and you can keep your little son and daughter with you and attend to his education, and the duties of your office will give employ to your mind. This must be employed to preserve life, and in this employment you will not only render important services to your country, but an act of great friendship

to me. I cannot hesitate to believe, but that you will yield your consent. I shall await your answer with much anxiety.

I pray you to look about and you will see the great difficulty, not to say impracticability [*sic*] of supplying your place in case of refusal, and I therefore feel the more justified in adding the claims of private friendship, to considerations of public character.

You must not my dear friend refuse my request. If at any time you should find the duties of the office too much for your health or other opportunity should offer to place you in a situation more congenial with your past pursuits, we will have time and opportunity to prepare for the gratification of your wishes, which shall continue as they have heretofore been the rule of my conduct in whatever relates to yourself always, satisfied that they will be none other than such as are reasonable.

Mr. Van Buren has also intimated to me his intention to withdraw, of course, a reorganization of my cabinet (proper) will be made. The Postmaster-genl. will only remain. When Eaton and Van Buren goes, justice to them, and to myself, and that electioneering scenes in congress may cease, or the intriguers exposed, will induce me to re-organize my Cabinet. This I regret, but have a long time foresaw, admonished but could not controled; my Cabinet must be a unit. I sincerely regret to loose Eaton and Van Buren two more independent republicans does not exist, who have laboured with me, with an eye single to the prosperity of the union. Still Mr. Van Buren, was singled out as a plotter. The cry plot, plot in Mr. Calhoun's book bro't me in mind of the old story — rogue cries rogue first to draw the attention from himself, that he might escape. I say to you frankly, that Van Buren is one of the most frank men I ever knew, with talents combined with common sense, but rarely to be met with — *a true man* with no guile. With my kind solicitations to you and your little family and your connections believe me,

Your friend,

ANDREW JACKSON.¹

The Honorable
H. L. White.

¹Jackson Mss.

White's afflictions, to which allusion was here made, were the loss of most of his family, the latest being the death of his wife on March 25, 1831. It is usually asserted that these misfortunes caused him to refuse the proffered secretaryship; but his reply to the letter quoted does not mention them. The reasons there assigned are that he was unfit for the position and too old to learn, that he could not afford to leave his property in Tennessee, and that it was against his principles to take office from a personal friend.¹

The receipt of this letter was followed by a conference to which Van Buren, Eaton, and Livingston were summoned. "It will now be proper," said Jackson to them, "to make a selection and the task is one of some difficulty."² It was, in fact, as hard to get a man for the place, not tainted with Calhoun influence who would command the respect of the country, as to find another way of providing for Eaton. The result of the conference was a still more urgent letter from Jackson to White trying to shake his decision. All White's arguments were disposed of—they were not formidable—the duties of the department could be easily learned and his property interest at home could be taken care of. Surrounded as he was, said Jackson, by bank men, nullifiers, and advocates of internal improvements, it was hard to find a man in whom he could confide. He must have one to whom he could unbosom himself, and who should it be but his old friend? "I could get," he added, "Col. Drayton, perhaps, who might be in favor of rechartering the Bank, acquainted with military matters, but unacquainted with Indian matters and whose appointment would arouse half of South Carolina and let it be remembered that he has been a strong Federalist. I like the man but I fear his politics—and having taken McLane (a Federalist), into the Treasury, I do not like to be compelled to take another."³

¹White to Jackson, April 20, 1831, Jackson *Mss.*

²Jackson to Van Buren, May 20, 1831, Van Buren *Mss.*

³Jackson to White, April 29, 1831, Jackson *Mss.*

This entreaty was seconded by the personal intercession of Major F. W. Armstrong, a mutual friend, who pled so well that White gave a reluctant consent; but a month later this was withdrawn on the ground that another daughter had developed consumption and he felt it his duty to remain near her in Tennessee. But we may look behind his excuses; his desire for retirement did not prevent his retention of his senatorship, and his grief did not keep him from a second marriage in the following year.¹ It seems that he had deeper reasons for his refusal than those assigned. He well remembered, if we accept the gossip of the day, the manner in which Eaton elevated himself into the cabinet, he was not in sympathy with the Eaton-Lewis influence in administration circles, he was not enthusiastic for Van Buren, and he was not now disposed to play the part which the combination arranged for him. He thus won the opposition of the inner circle in Washington, we eventually find him cooling toward the administration, and in 1836, he ran against Van Buren for the presidency.

The war department was now offered to Drayton, who declined, and it was then accepted by Lewis Cass, who had a good record as governor of Michigan. Lewis McLane, returning from London, became secretary of the treasury, realizing an old ambition for cabinet honors. The navy department was given to Levi Woodbury, of New Hampshire, a man of excellent capacity, whose one fault, in the eyes of Isaac Hill, was that in Portsmouth he and his family associated with the aristocracy and not with the Jackson party there.² Roger B. Taney, a promising lawyer of Baltimore, became attorney-general, and his ability justified the selection. Barry remained postmaster-general. It was a respectable cabinet, devoted to Jackson, submissive to his leadership, favorable to Van Buren, and for the most part com-

¹Armstrong to Jackson, May 22; Jackson to White, June 1; and White to Jackson, June 15; 1831; Jackson Mss. See also, *Memoir of White*, 419, 447-450.

²Massachusetts Historical Society *Proceedings*, XLIII., 72.

mitted to those aggressive measures into which the administration was about to throw itself. Establishing it was a gain in the working strength of the party.

The new cabinet indicated a new party control and new ideals. It announced that power was gone from Virginia and South Carolina and centered in a combination of the newer states of the West and Southwest with the large democratic states of the middle sea coast.

Eaton's future was a source of anxiety to Jackson, who clung stubbornly to a friend in distress. Since it was impossible to thrust him into White's seat, Eaton turned to that of Grundy, the other Tennessee senator, whose term expired in 1833. Grundy supported Jackson, who was thus forced to assume a neutral position. Each side claimed sympathy, but the President persisted in outward impartiality, although there are indications that secretly he leaned to Eaton.¹ But Grundy's appeal to the people was successful, and Eaton, who had little strength in the state when deprived of Jackson's open support, was forced at last to give up the fight. He was then willing to accept the governorship of Florida. The place did not please him, and he gave broad but vain hints that he wanted the governorship of Michigan, then vacant through the death of Governor Porter. In 1832, he was a delegate to the Baltimore convention. It was reported that he would vote against Van Buren, probably because the New Yorker's disfavor in Tennessee lessened Eaton's chances for the senatorship. But his rebellion disappeared with an intimation that Jackson expected him to do his duty.² In 1836, he was made minister to Spain. Richard Rush, Adams's candidate for vice-president in 1828, but now a

¹McLemore to Jackson, September 25; Jackson to D. Buford, September 10, 1832; William Carroll to Jackson, August 9 and December 3, 1833; Grundy to Jackson, May 6 and August 7, 1833; Jackson Mss. In the Jackson Mss. is a letter in Eaton's behalf, September,—1832. It is addressed "Gentlemen", and is in Jackson's handwriting. If sent at all, it was probably intended for discreet use.

²Parton, *Life of Jackson*, III., 421.

fervid Jackson man, made the journey across the Atlantic in the same ship with Eaton and wrote enthusiastically of him. Mrs. Eaton and her daughters, he said, were the life of the party aboard.¹ In 1840, Eaton turned openly against Van Buren and supported the enemies of Jackson. It completed a series of disappointments, which his capacity and character did not deserve. His unfortunate marriage wrecked a career of much promise. When Jackson heard of his course in 1840, he pronounced Eaton "the most degraded of all the apostates fed, clothed, and cherished by the administration."

The events of 1831 brought into high light the position of the "Kitchen Cabinet." Many men, some of whom were friends of the administration, thought that the trouble grew out of the course pursued by this group of irresponsible persons. Eaton's association with the group strengthened the idea in the popular mind. The candid Dunlap expressed his opinion of this phase of the situation in the following words to Jackson: "While the nation may admire the firm friendship by you manifested for Mr. Eaton, they cannot but rejoice at the hope of his retirement. Mr. W. B. Lewis, almost too small to write about, occupies a position before the nation alone from his presumed and assumed intimacy with you, which merits little attention. Send him home and no longer hold yourself accountable to the free and enlightened people for the arrogant follies of such a small but busy man. . . . To speak plain, the opinion prevails at large that W. B. Lewis is one of your most confidential councillors. This fact does, whether it be true or false, seriously affect the public. It raises a suspicion of your fitness to rule; paralyzes every noble feeling of your friends when it is said Billy Lewis is your Prest councillor."² Alfred Balch, another Tennessee supporter and a friend of Van Buren, spoke quite as

¹Rush to Jackson, September 26, 1836, Jackson Mss.

²Jackson to Kendall, September 23, 1840; *Cincinnati Commercial*, February 5, 1879.

³R. G. Dunlap to Jackson, June 30, 1831, copy in Library of Congress.

plainly. The feeling is general, he said, that in Washington there is "a power behind the throne greater than the throne itself. . . . It is my most decided opinion that Major Lewis should set up an establishment for himself — should till the close of the next session of congress disconnect himself from you and see you only in a ceremonious manner. It is also my opinion that Mr. Kendall should attend only to the duties of his office and let you wholly alone."¹ These things did not destroy Jackson's hold on the Tennesseans: he was their one hero and his grasp on the state organization was absolute; but the popular impatience expressed itself in defeating Eaton's attempt to be a senator and in the alienation of White.

The "Kitchen Cabinet" was not abolished, but it underwent two important changes. In the first place its *personnel* changed. The removal of Van Buren and Eaton took away two of the strongest members. Lewis opposed Jackson on the bank question, and weakened his influence. After 1831, the most influential friends of the President were Kendall, Blair, A. J. Donelson, and Taney. Thus we see the "Kitchen Cabinet" went through a reorganization of its own. In the second place, the party machinery was growing and the "Kitchen Cabinet" became less of a personal affair and more of an expression of party will. The increasing tendency to leave the patronage to members of congress, the removal of faction which caused the group to spend much energy in intrigue, and the crystallization of well defined party principles operated to the same end. This renewed group was less repugnant to the people than its predecessor.

But one act remained to complete the readjustment of the party, the nomination of Jackson and Van Buren in 1832. National nominating conventions had suddenly sprung into existence: the anti-masons held one in 1830 and another in 1831, the

¹Alfred Balch to Jackson, July 21, 1831; Jackson Mss.

national republicans held one in 1831, and the democrats followed the example in May, 1832. Jackson was induced to stand for a second term by the assurance¹ that it was necessary to preserve the union and by his innate repugnance to allowing himself to be driven by his opponents.¹ Delegates to the convention were chosen for loyalty to him, and his power was enough to carry them for his favorite. Major Lewis was the chief instrument through which this will was made manifest to the members of the convention. By correspondence and by personal solicitation he caused them to see that they would have the opposition of the leader if they did not vote for Van Buren. On the first ballot the New Yorker received two hundred and eight votes while his two opponents had together only seventy-five.

When Van Buren sailed for London, it was not determined that he should be the candidate for vice-president. Jackson, in fact, had a plan by which his friend should stay in Europe for two or three years, then come back to the cabinet and be in a position to be urged for first place on the ticket in 1836. "The opposition," he said—he was writing to Van Buren and the date was December 17th—"would be glad to reject your nomination as minister if they dared, but they know it would make you too popular." Referring to Livingston's desire to go abroad he said:

I am anxious again to have you near me, and it would afford me pleasure to gratify both. I find on many occasions I want your aid and Eatons. I have to labour hard, and be constantly watchfull. Had I you in the state department and Eaton in the war, with the others filled as they are, it would be one of the strongest and happiest administrations that could be formed. We could controle the little federalist leaven, in that high-minded, honorable, and talented friend of ours, Mr. McLane. Cass is an amiable talented man, a fine writer, but unfortunately it is hard for him to say no, and he thinks all men honest. This is a virtue

¹Jackson to Van Buren, September 18, 1831; Van Buren Mss.

in private, but unsafe in public life. . . . You are aware of the friendship I have for Livingston, and the respect I have for his talents; that he is a polished scholar, an able writer, and a most excellent man, but he knows nothing of mankind. He lacks in this respect that judgment that you possess, in so eminent a degree, his memory is somewhat failing him. . . . I would not be surprised if contrary to your declared wishes, you should be run for vice-presidency. As sure as the senate makes the attempt to reject your nomination, I am told it will be done.'

January 25th the threatened rejection was carried in the senate, the opposition resting on Van Buren's instructions to McLane in 1829 and Calhoun with four faithful followers coöperating with them on the ground that the New Yorker had seduced the mind of the President and formed plots within the party. The rejection was carried by the deciding vote of the vice-president.² Instantly the country was in a state of excitement. Meetings to endorse the rejected man were held in New York and throughout the country. The Jackson party declared that the insult was really against Jackson and the President agreed with the assertion. "This is your flood-tide," wrote the faithful Marcy to the absent one in London, "and if you wish to make your voyage, you should not neglect it. If there is hazard in the game, I think you still should play it."³ He added that if Van Buren did not come forward others would do so, that P. P. Barbour, of Virginia, was being pressed by the anti-tariff men and if not chosen for second place would be a strong candidate for first honor in 1836.

Jackson also wrote. "The insult to the executive would be avenged," he said, "by putting you into the very chair which is now occupied by him who cast the deciding vote against you. Hayne voted against you and his reasons for it shows that he

¹Jackson to Van Buren, December 17, 1831, Van Buren Mss.

²See Benton, *View*, I., 214-220, for an interesting account of Van Buren's rejection. See also Isaac Hill to Van Buren, January 29, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

³W. L. Marcy to Van Buren, January 26, 1831, and February 12, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

has fallen from the magnanimous position that we always assigned him.”¹ While this letter was crossing the ocean, it passed another coming westward to the writer of the first. “My dear friend,” it began, “I looked over the papers by the last Packet with no small degree of impatience for a letter from you — not that you owed me one, for I am ashamed to say that on that point, I am greatly your debtor, but from my anxiety to learn the precise effect which the extraction of a ball from your arm has had upon your health and comfort. The several grave suggestions in your long and interesting letter will not be lost sight of, but will be deferred without prejudice until things become a little more settled with you and we see things in a clearer light than at present. The opposition are feeding fat their old opposition against me I see, and what I confess surprises me a little, is to find that Mr. Clay is so blind as not to see the advantage which in the eyes of all honorable and liberal men he gives me over him by his course in the senate in respect to my nomination.” I have never seen the old aristocratic and federal spirit, he continued in substance, support a man of whom they did not feel sure that he was untrue to the democracy. They supported you at first on account of your letter to Monroe, but when you announced democratic views in later letters they turned against you. “They ruined Burr beyond redemption, they crippled Clinton, gave Calhoun his first mortal wound, and to form a correct estimate of the havoc which they have made with poor Clay, it is only necessary to contrast his present situation with what it was when he was the leader of the Republican Party in the House of Representatives.”

At this point the letter was interrupted till the next day, and in the interval came news of his rejection in the senate. His mail was full of advice as to coming home. Most of his correspondents advised him to return at once to look after his

¹Jackson to Van Buren, February 12, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

affairs, but Lewis and Cambreleng thought it would be wise to wait until the nominating convention had met, and he decided to take their suggestion, thus, as he said, giving the lie to those who accused him of intrigue and "leaving my fate to the unbiased disposal of our political friends."¹

Late in March, he left London for a short visit on the continent and arrived in America early in July. In England he was diplomatically successful, and the king, in telling him farewell said: "Well Mr. Van Buren, I cannot, of course, take part in the decision of your government, nor any branch of it, but I may be permitted, without any impropriety, to express my regret that it has been thought necessary to remove you from us." And as a token of esteem, the departing minister was invited to visit Windsor Castle from Saturday until Monday, where the king and queen, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Vaughan, former minister to Washington, did all they could to make his stay pleasant. He confided it all to Jackson with the intimation that it would be unwise to tell it abroad, lest it be thought that he was not a democrat; but he felt these attentions would counteract the attempts of his enemies "to mortify me in the presence of the assembled representatives of Europe, and the aristocracy of this country, and through that means to reach you."²

Andrew Jackson could not have suspected how skilfully his favorite was identifying his cause with that of the leader. To him it was all a piece of downright wickedness on one side and suffering virtue on the other. He showed his appreciation of the latter and his power to put down the former in the work of the Baltimore convention. When the repudiated minister arrived, the die was cast. He was accepted candidate for yoke-fellow in the canvass; and from all sides came demands for his counsel in meeting the crisis which the party now faced.

¹Van Buren to Jackson, February 20; and Van Buren to John Van Buren, February 23, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

²Van Buren to Jackson, March 28, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

XXVI

JACKSON AND NULLIFICATION

IN THE process by which Jacksonian democracy separated itself from the older republican factions in Virginia and South Carolina, the destruction of the movement for nullification was an important and instructive incident. It preserved the national basis of the party, saved the union from attempted separation, and gave the world an illustration of the strong personality of the man who directed the affairs of the central government. A further result was that it crystalized a certain powerful influence in the extreme South, which under Calhoun's leadership was to give direction to later history.

In the beginning of the national government, the federalists were supreme in South Carolina, following a group of which C. C. Pinckney was the chief ornament. The republicans carried the state for Jefferson, but their leaders were personally not able to cope with those of the opposite party. The state resented the inferior position to which the Virginia leadership assigned it and was one of the first to range itself with those who threatened to overthrow that leadership before the beginning of the War of 1812. Three leaders now appeared, Lowndes, Cheves, and Calhoun, either of whom was the equal of any Virginian then in active politics. In their reaction against the old school and partly because of the continuance of the old federalist leaven in the state, they became more national than the strict republicans. A protective tariff, a national bank, and internal improvements all found place in their philosophy. They became leading advocates of each of these policies and had their

followers in many parts of the country. In the breakdown of the Virginia influence during Monroe's second term, Lowndes and Calhoun had ambitions for the presidency. The former was nominated by the state legislature for that high station in 1821, and he was endorsed as a nationalist. His death a year later, removed him from the arena, and Calhoun received a similar nomination, although it is doubtful if he was as popular with the mass of South Carolinians as Lowndes. In the same year, 1822, Robert Y. Hayne was elected United States senator as a nationalist, defeating William Smith, against whom a strong argument was that he favored secession rather than accept the Missouri Compromise.¹ All these incidents show that at this time the state was safely national, in spite of a strong and rather radical state rights party, and that Calhoun, while not very popular with the masses, had the support of the dominant group of politicians and was everywhere honored as a man of great ability and as a son who was likely to bring honor to the state.

Ten years later, this condition was reversed. The state rights party was in control of the government, the voters were warmly committed to nullification, and leaders who formerly spoke of the blessings and glories of the union had hurriedly given in their allegiance to a group who looked upon separation as possible and under certain conditions as desirable.

The cause of this change of political sentiment was the tariff. It seemed as if the manufacturers of the North would never be satisfied with moderate protection and that they were determined to have their desires regardless of the interests of the agricultural South. Whatever they asked, they managed to find a way to carry through congress, and when at last they carried the tariff of 1828, Southern feeling was bitter. South Carolina was particularly violent, and its violence looked to action.

¹Jervey, *Robert Y. Hayne and his Times*, 125, 143, 144.

While Virginia talked about strict construction and constitutional theory, this more aggressive community began to devise some practical means of counteracting the so-called wiles of the North. Nullification was invented as an instrument of war: its legitimacy was accepted by the state at large. The people of South Carolina were ever sensitive in resenting what they considered discrimination. They were accustomed to fervid electioneering from early days; and when the supporters of nullification suggested this extreme measure as a fundamental right they made it the occasion for a crusade of liberty. This extremity of fervor was not calculated to lead to wise action or correct thinking. It caused the state to exaggerate its wrongs and to accept a constitutional theory which its well wishers in other Southern states would not adopt for their own.

But behind the tariff was slavery. Calhoun, in 1830, expressed a recognized truth when he said, speaking for his people:

I consider the Tariff, but as the occasion, rather than the real cause of the present unhappy state of things. The truth can no longer be disguised, that the peculiar domestic institution of the Southern States, and the consequent direction, which that and her soil and climate have given to her industry, has placed them in regard to taxation and appropriations in opposite relation to the majority of the union; against the danger of which, if there be no protective power in the reserved rights of the states, they must in the end be forced to rebel, or submit to have their permanent interests sacrificed, their domestic institutions subverted by colonization and other schemes and themselves and children reduced to wretchedness. Thus situated, the denial of the right of the state to interfere constitutionally in the last resort, more alarms the thinking, than all other causes; and however strange it may appear, the more universally the state is condemned and her right denied, the more resolute she is to assert her constitutional powers, lest the neglect to assert should be considered a practical abandonment of them, under such circumstances.¹

¹Calhoun to Maxey, September 11, 1830, Marcou Mss.

The leading opponents of the tariff in South Carolina were Crawford men, who disliked Calhoun intensely, among them Dr. Thomas Cooper, William Smith, and James Hamilton, Jr. They began serious agitation after the passage of the tariff bill of 1824 and were well received by the people of the state. Each advance of the tariff in national politics increased their hold in South Carolina. Fighting for power as well as for principles, they turned the popular resentment against everything Northern. They attacked Adams for his centralizing policies and arraigned internal improvements in terms that made Calhoun wince. Few state politicians dared withstand them, and many followers of the vice-president, among them Hayne and McDuffie, gave in their support.

The wincing Calhoun did not long hesitate. Much as he valued his national influence, he realized that it was worth little if he had not the support of his own state. He gradually shifted his position on the tariff and in 1827 defeated the woollens bill by his casting vote in the senate. He thus lost an important part of his support in the North, while he made himself secure in the South. As to his presidential ambition, he hoped that the shifting of the political current might soon leave the tariff high and dry and that his connection with the Jacksonian democracy might bear him forward in its successful sweep. But the tariff would not down. The law passed in 1828 was more objectionable than any of its predecessors, and in spite of the fact that its worst features were introduced by Southerners to make it so objectionable that New England would vote against the bill, the South was deeply resentful. The wrath of the South Carolinians was, therefore, proportionally increased and Calhoun's complication with their cause was further augmented. Both he and they were now irrevocably launched in the course of nullification.

Calhoun did not originate the nullification theory. In 1827,

there appeared a series of essays under the title of *The Crisis*, dealing with the situation in the state and announcing nullification as a remedy. They were written by Robert J. Turnbull, a prominent leader of the state rights party. At that time, the majority of the anti-tariff men in South Carolina favored pacific measures to carry their purpose. They talked about the ballot-box, the influence of public opinion, and the results of coöperation among all the states which were opposed to protection. Turnbull threw all this aside. "Let South Carolina be bold and resist oppression," he said. The union was not yet enough consolidated to make it possible to coerce a state: the conduct of Georgia in regard to the Indians showed this. It was never intended that the supreme court, a part of the general government, should be arbiter in a dispute between that government and a state: its decisions ought not to extend to political matters. Let the legislature of a sovereign state protest, there was no tribunal of last resort, and the state might do as it saw fit. In its assertion of the compact theory and the denial of the arbitrament of the supreme court, this doctrine undoubtedly bore resemblance to the Virginia-Kentucky resolutions, and it was the unshaped form from which Calhoun evolved his perfected theory.¹ It did not contain the word "nullification," the proposed plan of meeting the situation being described merely as "resistance."

Turnbull's appeal met with little response at once, but in the following year, the "tariff of abominations" brought an actual crisis. Some of the state's delegation in congress were for resigning as a protest, but after consultation, it was agreed to try to temper the popular resentment until after the election, and then to let the people's wrath have its own course.

This hesitancy was due to anticipations in regard to Jackson. The South Carolinians had much hope that he would oppose the

¹See *The Crisis* (1827); also Houston, *Nullification*, 71-73.

tariff. It is true he was mildly for protection in 1824, and his utterances in the campaign were exceedingly cautious; but this was only politics. Was he not a Southern man, a cotton planter, and if Calhoun, one of the partners in the great national game could be shaken from his position why not the other? So they reasoned, and they would do nothing rash in the crucial year of 1828, nothing that would throw the election into the hands of Adams and Clay, from whom they could expect no help at all.

The election was hardly over before they threw themselves on the administration. Cooper, an old Crawford leader, opened correspondence with the New York Crawfordites. If the tariff was not repealed, he said, there would be no union at the end of the new administration, and New York especially might take warning lest the South goaded to anger should transfer the "Southern agency" to London. By "Southern agency" he meant the function of handling Southern products and purchases.¹

These protests were made to Van Buren as controlling member of the cabinet, and they kept up until well into 1830. His own letters in reply, so far as they are preserved, were most non-committal. But the confident tone in which his correspondents continued to write indicate that they were not repulsed. Cambreleng and J. A. Hamilton, who also received letters, were more alarmed and felt that a compromise ought to be made.

But Cooper and his associates did not wait to see what Jackson would do. Before the election of 1828 was decided, they made arrangements for a vigorous campaign as soon as that event was out of the way. In the summer of 1828, several of them visited Calhoun at his South Carolina home. He talked to them freely, and at their suggestion stated his views in his famous *Exposition*. This, with little change, was presented to the legislature the following autumn, as the report of a committee. It was not adopted, but five thousand copies were

¹Cooper to Van Buren, March 24, 1829, Van Buren Mss.

ordered printed for distribution. It was a formal and complete statement of the theory of nullification, furnishing a constitutional argument for doing what Turnbull declared could and ought to be done. It was known at the time by a few of those most concerned that it came from the pen of the vice-president.¹ When in 1831, after his definite break with Jackson, Calhoun threw himself openly into the cause of nullification, he re-stated his position in *An Address to the People of South Carolina*. The argument in these two papers was so subtle that few of those who tried to explain it, gave evidence of understanding it. So many interpretations were given that in 1832, Calhoun, at the request of James Hamilton, Jr., wrote an amplification of his doctrine known as the *Fort Hill Letter*. From these three papers posterity has derived its knowledge of the theory of nullification. To quote the words of the author, "The great and leading principle is, that the general government emanated from the people of the several states, forming distinct political communities, and acting in their separate and sovereign capacity, and not from all the people forming one aggregate political community; that the constitution of the United States is, in fact, a compact, to which each state is a party, in the character already described; and that the several states, or parties, have a right to judge of its infractions; and in case of a deliberate, palpable, and dangerous exercise of power not delegated, they have the right, in the last resort, to use the language of the Virginia Resolutions, '*to interpose for arresting the progress of the evil, and for maintaining, within their respective limits, the authorities, rights, and liberties appertaining to them.*'"²

Out of this was constructed the principle that a state might annul a law of congress which it pronounced unconstitutional, and that the general government was an agent of the states, in fact,

¹Hunt, *Life of Calhoun*, 108, 109.

²Calhoun, *Works*, VI., 60.

an agent of any particular state, so far as the will of that state was concerned. It was a doctrine of more devastating effect than secession. Secession would have split the union in twain; nullification was calculated to dissolve it state by state.

Developments in South Carolina attracted attention in other states and in Washington. Anti-tariff men generally, and particularly the Southerners, felt sympathy for the movement, but hesitated to commit themselves to so unexpected a doctrine. Nullifiers were exceedingly anxious to get the support of Virginia, which might carry that of other states, and that probably is why they stressed the connection between their movement and the resolutions of 1798-1799.

One natural result was to stimulate the feeling for union, and the two sides thus formed soon came to a clash in the debates in congress, Webster and Hayne being the opposing champions. The latter rejoiced in the opportunity to set before the world the doctrine of the new school, and his great speech did all for the cause that could have been expected of him. It won more respect from Southerners of the day than posterity has given it. Benton praised it highly, and in South Carolina it was hailed as a "complete answer" to the aggressive North. Later it was asserted, but without specific supporting evidence, that the President at that time held the same view. He considered himself a state rights man, and probably approved Hayne's defense of the cause. But we must not take very seriously his estimate of a constitutional argument. His opinions were chiefly formed through feeling, and they were apt to change with the occasions.

Through all this period, Jackson's attitude toward the nullifiers was candid but discreet. To James Hamilton, Jr's., assurance, May, 1828, that the state would "take no strong measure until your election is put beyond a doubt," he replied in words which would have been understood by a man less devoted to his

enthusiasm. It was much to be regretted, he said, that the tariff came up for discussion at this time: "There is nothing I shudder at more than the idea of a separate Union. . . . The State governments hold in check the federal and must ever hold it in check, and the virtue of the people supported by the sovereign states, must prevent consolidation, and will put down that corruption engendered by the executive, wielded, as it has been lately, by executive organs, to perpetuate their own power. The result of the present struggle between the virtue of the people and executive patronage will test the stability of our government."¹

September 3d Hayne wrote. He denied that his people desired disunion, as charged from some quarters, and declared they were loyal to Jackson and believed in his fairness. "Should Mr. Adams be reëlected," he said, "and should his administration continue to act on the policy of wholly disregarding the feelings and interests of the Southern States; should they push the manufacturing system to the point of annihilating our foreign commerce, and above all, should they meddle with our slave institutions, I would not be answerable for the consequences. I think our Legislature will probably take strong grounds on these subjects, but I have no apprehension of their going at this time beyond a formal manifesto setting forth the injuries of the South, and giving a solemn warning against the consequences of a *continuous disregard* of our rights and interests. Should you be elected, as there is every reason to believe, we shall look to you as a *Pacificator*."² The manifesto, to which he referred, was undoubtedly Calhoun's *Exposition*.

Hayne's letter was a warning and a suggestion. There is no evidence of Jackson's real feeling about the matter. Outwardly, at that time, he gave no token of opposition, but he yielded noth-

¹J. Hamilton, Jr., to Jackson, May 25, 1828; Jackson to J. Hamilton, Jr., June 29, 1828, Jackson Mss.

²Hayne to Jackson, September 3, 1828, Jackson Mss.

ing to the nullifiers in their desire to have a secretary of the treasury favorable to a lower tariff. Calhoun's connection with the movement was soon known in Washington, at least as early as inauguration day, but this could hardly have affected Jackson. Nullification was as yet entirely theoretical, it was in touch with the Southern party, he was still well disposed toward the vice-president, and party harmony was essential. But the controlling faction was opposed to Calhoun, and in that was the possibility of much hostility.

The bold challenge of 1828 was followed by a year and a half of singular calm. Did they wait for the expected triumph of Calhoun in 1832, or were they endeavoring to learn what Jackson would do if the program should proceed at once? Neither question can be answered, but Calhoun's expectations in the former respect must have been deeply bound up with those of the South Carolina party, and a realization of this gave courage to his enemies. The Webster-Hayne debate in January, 1830, placed the two theories of the union definitely before the nation. People everywhere were taking sides, and it began to be asked on which the President would be found. Within three months of the famous debate the question was answered at the Jefferson dinner.

In the autumn of 1829, the President learned of Calhoun's position in regard to the invasion of Florida, during the winter and early spring the Eaton affair was in its most annoying stage, and that also bore on his feeling toward Calhoun. It was, therefore, natural that he should have made the occasion of denouncing nullification that for striking Calhoun a severe and unexpected blow. April 15th, was Jefferson's birthday, long observed by democrats for renewing their devotion to party principles. As the day approached in 1830, the South Carolina group prepared to take prominent part in its celebration. Their object, says Van Buren very plausibly, was two-fold; (1) to get the sym-

pathy of Virginia by exalting Jefferson and by stressing the relation of their own doctrine to the resolutions of 1798, and (2) to please Georgia, long opposed to South Carolina, by praising her position in the affair of the Cherokees, itself a kind of nullification.

Invitations were sent as a matter of course to Jackson and Van Buren. The two took counsel and agreed that Jackson at the dinner should give a toast which should announce the hostility of the administration to nullification. The sentiment was written down and placed in his pocket before he went to the dinner. When called on he arose and proposed: "Our Union, it must be preserved!" Consternation seized the state rights group. Hayne, quick witted and resourceful, hastily suggested to the speaker that the word "federal" be placed before the word "union." He thought this would make the toast lean somewhat to a state rights interpretation. Now this, says Van Buren, was the way the sentiment was first written, but Jackson, scrawling it off on his toast-card just before he arose, omitted "federal." No objection was made to its restoration.

Calhoun, who followed, gave a toast more expressive of South Carolina principles — "The Union, next to our liberty most dear! May we all remember that it can only be preserved by respecting the rights of the States and distributing equally the benefit and the burthen of the Union!"¹ It lacked the laconic force of Jackson's utterance, nor did it come with the same sense of authority. It is noteworthy that the next day Forsyth wrote to Crawford the letter which brought forth the avowal of Calhoun's attitude in the Seminole affair.²

The South Carolinians did not take offense at the toast but tried to lessen its effect by asserting that it must be understood in a "Pickwickian sense." Some of them took comfort out of

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, IV, 99-107, Van Buren Mss.

²See above, II., 509.

the Maysville veto, which came a month later, but among them were few of those who followed Calhoun closely. In the state, they tried to create the feeling that they had the President's support. About this time — in May, 1830 — Joel R. Poinsett, returning from Mexico, arrived in Washington and had a frank talk with Jackson about South Carolina affairs. The latter showed that he was committed against nullification which he pronounced madness. Poinsett proceeded to South Carolina, where an active union party was being organized. In it were former Governor Taylor, D. R. Williams, D. E. Huger, James L. Petigru and Hugh S. Legare. Between these two parties there was much scowling with some stronger action during the second half of 1830. Early in the next year, Calhoun published his attack on Van Buren and Jackson, and in the following summer he uncovered his position as champion of nullification and gave a vigor to the protesting party in his state which up to that time it did not have.

These events seem to indicate that throughout the quiescent period in 1830, the movement waited on Jackson. The vice-president arrived in Washington a few days before New Year's determined to keep aloof from the President. He refused to attend the New Year's reception at the White House and showed to whomever asked to see it the hostile correspondence of the preceding summer. To his friends, he wrote in deprecation of their confidence in the President: "The position which General Jackson has taken of halting between the parties," he said, "as if it were possible to reconcile two hostile systems, must keep us distracted and weakened during his time. To expect to be able to support him, taking the position he has, and to unite the South in zealous opposition to the system, which he more than half supports, is among the greatest absurdities. Had he placed himself on principle, and surrounded himself with the talents, virtue and experience of the party, his personal popularity would,

beyond all doubt, have enabled us to restore the Constitution, arrest the progress of corruption, harmonize the Union, and thereby avert the calamity which seems to impend over us; as it is, that very popularity is the real source of our weakness and distraction. . . . Believing that an united effort of the South is hopeless during his time, we must next look to the action of our own state, as she is the only one, that can possibly put herself on her sovereignty. Nothing must be omitted to unite and strengthen her, for on her union and firmness, at this time, the liberty of the whole country in no small degree depends.” In the *Exposition* Calhoun established himself as covert leader of nullification; in this letter he came out as open leader of the cause.

An incident of midsummer, 1830, shows how the game was played in the plan to win Jackson for one side or the other. When Poinsett arrived in Charleston, the union faction gave him a dinner which was intended to rally their own followers. The nullifiers decided to have a dinner of their own and made the arrival of Senator Hayne the occasion. The event was a great success and attracted notice throughout the country. James Hamilton, Jr., sent an account of it to Van Buren, with whom he was in frequent correspondence.¹ He added a warning against Poinsett, charging him with a declaration against devolution, that is, against handing the presidency down to a successor. And then Hamilton shrewdly observed that he himself was for the reelection of Jackson and that the influence of the United States Bank in the state was against the nullifiers. He evidently hoped this would draw the sympathy of the man at Washington, of whom, Calhoun declared a half year later, as we have seen, that he only could unite the whole South in the cause of nullification.

¹Calhoun, *Correspondence* (Jameson, Editor), 280.

²J. Hamilton, Jr., to Van Buren, September 20, 1830; Van Buren to Jackson, July 25, 1830; Van Buren Mss.

It is impossible to say how near Jackson came during this period of waiting to fulfil the hopes of the nullifiers. With most of their leaders he was on friendly terms, but whether his motives were political or otherwise does not appear. In his ordinary moods he was a good politician and quite as capable of a deep game of delay as some who were not so violent in their moments of excitement.

Van Buren's attitude at this time is more easily seen. Hamilton's letters impressed him, and on the one just mentioned, he endorsed the opinion that the letter showed that in the Charleston dinner, the nullifiers went further than they intended. A few days after he heard of that affair, he wrote to Jackson that nullification was declining and the more reliable element among its supporters would soon return to a better state of mind. This shrewd politician was very timid and dependent on his colleagues for his views. Both failings here tended to bring him into acquiescence with the part of the scheme it was desired to make him play.

Having brought Van Buren to a yielding state of mind, the nullifiers sought through him to affect the will of Jackson himself. Hayne cautiously made the approach. October 28th—it was still 1830—he wrote to Van Buren in anticipation of approaching events. The situation in South Carolina, he said, was exaggerated by enemies out of the state. No measures had been adopted or contemplated looking “in the remotest degree” to a dissolution of the union: the announcement of an abstract right on the part of a state to judge of an infraction of the constitution and to provide means of redress, he asserted, “no more implies the immediate and rash exercise of that power than the assertion of the right of a state to secede from the Union (which all seem to admit), implies that the Union ought to be immediately dissolved. . . . ‘The extreme medicine of the State is not likely to become our daily bread.’ If our friends in Wash-

ington have the smallest uneasiness at the state of affairs in South Carolina, bid them dismiss their fears. No rash measures will be adopted—but tranquility will never be restored to the South until the American System is abandoned, and if the federal government shall go on in the assumption of unconstitutional power, *collision with the States* will sooner or later become inevitable.”¹

As to practical affairs, Hayne admitted that the legislature was about to vote on a convention, but since a two-thirds vote was necessary to call such a body, he thought it would not carry. But if it should be called, it would undoubtedly be more conservative than the legislature. Its effect would be to draw the attention of the country to the burden of the South on account of the tariff, and that would give Jackson an opportunity to intervene as a “pacificator.” The letter reveals the part the nullifiers hoped to get the President to play, and this probably accounts for their quiet attitude in 1830. They were willing to award to Jackson the glory of making a compromise, if he could only be relied upon to play the right part at the proper time.

But Jackson was not suited for the part he was desired to assume. The only pacification he was apt in making was such as he gave to the Creeks in 1814 and to the army of Pakenham a few months later—the peace of submission. He was already determined that the plans of the nullifiers were “mad projects,” and he caused his friends to know his position.² In the autumn the attempt to call a convention was defeated in the legislature by the efforts of the active union party, who were already beginning to assert in the state that the President was on their side. They could cite his Jefferson birthday speech as well as his declarations to friends to show that he was against the nullifiers.

¹Van Buren Mss.

²Jackson to Robert Oliver, October 26, 1830, Poinsett to Jackson, October 23, 1830; Jackson Mss.

Calhoun's special friends knew of the quarrel of the preceding summer, and they must have known how hopeless it was to expect help from Jackson. The vice-president, fresh from consultations with these friends, arrived in Washington late in December and began at once to prepare the pamphlet he soon hurled at Van Buren. He would have been pleased, as we have seen,¹ to keep the President out of the quarrel entirely, but that was impossible. From that time, Calhoun became the chief reliance of the nullifiers, and his powerful aid, with the surrender of thoughts of compromise, gave the party the dominance in the state.

In the summer of 1831, two Charleston merchants, both nullifiers, undertook to test the constitutionality of the tariff laws. They refused to pay the bonds they had given to guarantee the payment of duties on certain commodities, alleging the illegality of a protective tariff. The district-attorney was instructed to prosecute them, but he, a nullifier, refused and resigned his office. Jackson's first impulse was to impeach him for violating his oath, but that was too impracticable, and he contented himself with sending a secret agent to Charleston to report on the progress of events while proceedings to collect the bonds were halted. At the same time, he was in constant correspondence with the union leaders in the city, particularly Poinsett, from whom he received full information. Letters to and from these leaders constitute a valuable source of information for this phase of the movement.²

While things hung in the balance, almost at the last moment before the appearance of the Calhoun pamphlet, Hayne and his friends undertook to get one of their supporters appointed district-attorney in South Carolina. Jackson refused to make the

¹See above, II., 517.

²They are found in the Jackson Mss., in the Library of Congress, and in the Poinsett papers in the possession of the Pennsylvania Historical Society. The latter collection has been freely used by Stillé in a sketch of *The Life and Services of Joel K. Poinsett* *Pennsylvania Magazine of History*, 1888.

appointment, and Hayne wrote a remonstrance against his action, arguing that the administration ought to be as fair as the state rights party in South Carolina, which placed union men in state office regardless of their politics. Jackson replied frankly that he did not believe a state could nullify a law of congress and that he would be highly blamable if he appointed a man to execute the laws of the union who openly avowed that one of those laws could not be executed in the state in which he lived. It was a considerate letter, and it expressed great personal consideration for many of the nullifiers. It must have been the result of careful consideration; for on the back of Hayne's letter he wrote in terms less cautious: "Note — I draw a wide difference between State Rights and the advocates of them, and a nullifier. One will preserve the union of the States. The other will dissolve the union by destroying the Constitution by acts unauthorized in it."¹ This comment has logical defects, but the letter to Hayne must have left no doubt in that gentleman's mind in regard to the attitude of the President.

Having lost hope of Jackson's aid, the nullifiers now proceeded, as Calhoun indicated in January,² to organize that forceful protest which was to run so close to disunion. Even after the publication of the pamphlet in regard to the breach with the President, Calhoun thought it best to say little about Jackson and to concentrate the opposition on Van Buren,³ his purpose being, evidently, not to give the former a pretext to take decided part in the controversy. But this was soon seen to be impossible. May 19th, a dinner was given to McDuffie in Charleston, at which the most extreme nullification sentiment was avowed. Even this did not arouse Calhoun. He saw the tendency it would have to commit the state, but he favored moderation for the present, believing it necessary to give the thinking portion of

¹Jackson to Hayne, February 6, 1831; Hayne to Jackson, February 4, 1831, Jackson Mss.

²See above, II. 557.

³Calhoun, *Correspondence* (Jameson, Editor), 289, 290.

the democratic party time to rally to him, after his exposure of Van Buren.¹ His hesitation lasted until July 26th, when he came definitely forward as the avowed champion of the nullifiers. His challenge was expressed in the *Address on the relations which the States and General Government Bear to Each Other*, a restatement of the arguments of the *Exposition* of 1828. From that time he was the open and preëminent leader of the South Carolina movement, giving it a powerful impetus and making it clear that the people of the state could no longer avoid a choice between union and nullification.

When the *Address* was given to the public,, Jackson's position was made equally clear. July 4th, both sides in Charleston made elaborate preparations to celebrate the holiday. There were speeches by the respective leaders, and the unionists read publicly with great pride a letter from Jackson announcing complete opposition to nullification, an opinion, he said, "which I have neither interest nor inclination to conceal."² This letter was dated June 14th, the day before Berrien, the last opposition member, left the cabinet and several days before the angry controversy between Eaton and Ingham incensed both sides. It seems that in this step Jackson acted deliberately: the alliance with Calhoun was repudiated, friends of Calhoun were thrust out of the cabinet, and now the administration was ranged against nullification. The democratic party had cast off the semblance of nationalism which internal improvements had implied, it was about to crush that extreme form of state rights which came to a head in South Carolina.

In the following winter, the tariff was again before congress. A new bill was passed, the chief purpose of which was to remove the inequalities which won for the bill of 1828 the name, "Tariff of Abominations." It was much like the bill of 1824, and was

¹Calhoun *Correspondence*, 294; Niles, *Register*, XL., 236

²Niles, *Register*, XL., 351.

still strongly protective. It did not satisfy the South, and the nullifiers, whose aim was to threaten so loudly that the majority would abandon some of their numerical advantage, decided that the contest should go on.

The tariff passed in July. South Carolina found it exceedingly objectionable and the nullifiers raised loud cries in the campaign then waging and demanded a convention to consider the state's relation to the new law. The results at the polls were favorable and the governor, an ardent nullifier, called a meeting of the legislature, which quickly ordered an election for a convention to meet on November 19th. This precipitancy was employed in order that the intended programme might be completed before the meeting of congress in December, 1832. Now appeared the effects of the powerful efforts of Calhoun. Nearly the whole state turned to his doctrine, and, November 24th, the convention passed the famous nullification ordinance. This instrument declared the tariff laws of 1828 and 1832 unconstitutional and not binding on the state, it prohibited appeals to the supreme court of the United States in cases arising under this ordinance, it ordered all state officials except members of the legislature to take an oath to obey the ordinance, and it fixed February 1, 1833, as the day when it would go into operation. It closed with a threat that an attempt of the federal government to oppose its enforcement would absolve South Carolina from allegiance to the union and leave it a separate sovereign state.¹

Three days later the state legislature met in regular session and passed laws to meet contingencies likely to arise. It enacted a replevin law and other bills to enable a person who refused to pay duties to recover damages from federal customs officers, who might seize his goods, it passed a law looking to armed resistance, and finally adopted a test for ridding the state of officials who would not accept nullification. Thus panoplied

¹Houston, *Nullification in South Carolina*, 106-111.

South Carolina marched to the contest with the nation, at whose head was Andrew Jackson, keenly alive to the situation.

September 11, 1832, before the South Carolina elections were held, Jackson, fully alive to the progress of nullification, sent a warning to Woodbury, secretary of the navy. Efforts were being made, he said, to win naval and army officers in Charleston from their loyalty to the union, and this must be prevented. There were plans, he asserted, to gain possession of the forts there in order to prevent a blockade of the place, and he directed that the naval authorities at Norfolk, Virginia, be in readiness to despatch a squadron if it were needed.¹ October 29th, he ordered the commanders of the forts in Charleston harbor to double their vigilance and defend their posts against any persons whatsoever.²

Early in November, he sent George Breathit to South Carolina ostensibly as an agent of the post-office department, but he carried letters to Poinsett and was instructed to visit various parts of the state observing the temper, purposes, and military strength of the nullifiers. "The duty of the Executive is a plain one," said Jackson, "the laws will be executed and the Union preserved by all the constitutional and legal means he is invested with, and I rely with great confidence on the support of every honest patriot in South Carolina."³

When Jackson heard the news from South Carolina, he wrote in his fragmentary journal:

South Carolina has passed her ordinance of nullification and secession. As soon as it can be had in authentic form, meet it with a proclamation. Nullification has taken deep root in Virginia, it must be arrested by the good sense of the people, and by a full appeal to them by proclamation, the absurdity of nullification strongly repudiated as a constitutional and peaceful measure, and the principles of our govt. fully set forth, as a government based on the confederation of perpetual union

¹Jackson to Woodbury, September 11, 1832, Jackson Mss.

²Jackson to secretary of war, October 29, 1832, Jackson Mss.

³Jackson to Poinsett, November 7, 1832, Poinsett Papers, Stillé's sketch reprinted, 61.

made more perfect by the present constitution, which is the act of the people so far as powers are granted by them in the federal constitution.¹

Here we have the germ of the nullification proclamation. The ideas are not as clear as in that famous paper, but the note shows that he was on his own initiative thoroughly opposed to secession.

The position of the executive, however, had some serious difficulties. Legally he might interfere forcefully in state matters in two events: 1. If the governor of the state requested him to suppress an insurrection; but under existing circumstances in South Carolina this was not to be expected. 2. To enforce the laws of congress; but the laws provided no clear procedure for such intervention when the law was violated by a state. It was contemplated that in an ordinary case a federal officer could summon a *posse comitatus*, as a state officer might do, to aid him in his duty; but this could hardly be done against a whole people. It was an unforeseen contingency, and the executive branch of government must find a way to meet it. Jackson realized the deficiency and asked congress to enact a law to remedy it; but until that could be done, he fell back on the theory of the *posse*. He encouraged Poinsett and his friends to be ready to be summoned on such duty, he placed arms at convenient and safe places, some of them across the North Carolina border, and he promised that if necessary, he would march to the aid of the defenders of the union at the head of a large force from other states, itself a kind of augmented *posse comitatus*.

Such was Jackson's feeling: in practice, he could not go so far. Nullification, until the adoption of the ordinance of November 24th, was closely bound up with the general Southern opposition to the tariff, and the administration hesitated to press it lest the whole South should become nullifiers. The

¹Jackson Mss.

South Carolinians played earnestly for this wider cause, and sought particularly to win Virginia. To that end, they stressed the connection between nullification and the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, trying to convert the regular republicans in that state. But the old antipathy was too strong: Virginia republicans of the Crawford school disliked Calhoun and all he stood for too much to follow him into his new vagaries. All this did not appear on the surface, and when in July, 1832, Senator Tazewell, an extreme state rights doctrinaire, suddenly resigned his seat in the United States senate, it caused much apprehension in administrative circles¹ which desired to avoid taking the initiative in a policy of repression.

But vigilance was not relaxed. Seven revenue cutters and the *Natchez* a ship of war, were sent to Charleston with orders to be ready for instant action. They took position where their guns could sweep the "Battery," the fashionable water front, on which dwelt the most prominent families in the place. Troops were ordered from Fortress Monroe to reinforce the garrison, and General Scott was directed to take chief command of the defenses and to strengthen them as he found necessary. There was to be no relaxation of the customs regulations, and in all things the authority of the government must be unimpaired. But it was not desired to irritate the inhabitants, and the commander was directed to surrender all state property claimed of him, even to arms and military supplies.

November 18th Jackson pronounced the movement of the nullifiers a bubble, but admitted their recklessness might lead to worse. In the forthcoming message, he said, he would refer to the affair as something to be checked by existing law. He would only ask that the revenue laws be changed so that in states where the legislature sought to defeat them, the collector might demand duties in cash. By ceasing to give bonds to

¹Jackson to Poinsett, December 9, 1832, Poinsett Papers, in Stillé's reprint, page 64.

secure deferred payments, the payer of duties could not bring suit in which he disputed the legality of the duty. "This," declared Jackson, "is all that we want peacefully to nullify the nullifiers."¹

The quick and vigorous action of the nullifiers in the succeeding fortnight made him change his mind. In his annual message, December 4th, 1832, he referred to the danger which threatened, expressed the hope that the laws would prove sufficient for the crisis, and promised to communicate further information on the subject if it should be necessary.² These words disappointed most friends of the union, and his opponents openly expressed their horror. "The message," said Adams, "goes to dissolve the the Union into its original elements and is in substance a complete surrender to the nullifiers." Jackson was much embarrassed by the situation. The party was alarmed at the prospect of a contest which might involve the whole South. When the message was written, some days before it went to congress, he was not convinced that extreme measures would be necessary.

About this time he received a letter from Poinsett, written November 29th, which showed how dangerous the situation had become in the disaffected state. Sixteen thousand citizens, said the writer, were deprived of their rights by the recent action of the legislature and left without other source of help than the national government. Some unionists, Colonel Drayton among them, thought congress would acquiesce and let South Carolina go in peace: some despairing ones even talked of leaving the state for other homes. But Poinsett protested that he would remain and fight it out, whatever the consequences. Such a letter was calculated to arouse the deepest emotions in a man like Jackson, who on December 2nd, said in a letter of his own, "Nullification means insurrection and war; and the other States have a right to

¹ Jackson to [Van Buren], November 18, 1832, Jackson Mss.

² Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 599.

put it down." December 5th, he announced that congress would sustain him in a programme of force against nullification. "I will meet it," he said, "at the threshold and have the leaders arrested and arraigned for treason. I am only waiting to be furnished with the acts of your Legislature to make a communication to Congress, asking the means necessary to carry my proclamation into complete effect, and by an exemplary punishment of those leaders for treason so unprovoked, put down this rebellion and strengthen our happy Government both at home and abroad. . . . The wicked madness and folly of the leaders, the delusion of their followers, in the attempt to destroy themselves and our Union has not its parallel in the history of the world. The Union will be preserved. The safety of the republic, the supreme law, which will be promptly obeyed by me."

The proclamation, which he issued the day after he sent this message of support to the union men in South Carolina, was a warning to the nullifiers, an appeal to the patriotism of the nation, and a constitutional argument against the doctrines of Calhoun. The doctrine of state veto on laws of congress, said the proclamation, is constitutionally absurd, and if allowed it would have dissolved the union when Pennsylvania objected to the excise law, when Virginia resented the carriage tax, or when New England objected to the War of 1812. A law thus nullified by one state must be void for all; so that one state could repeal an act of congress for the whole union by merely declaring it unconstitutional. Through the whole document, ran a strong vein of nationalistic philosophy, supporting the right of congress to establish protection, denying that the constitution is a compact of sovereign states, and announcing that a state has no right to secede. The proclamation closed with a fervid appeal to the "fellow-citizens of my native state" not to incur the penalty of the laws by following blindly "men who are either de-

¹Jackson to Poinsett, December 7 and 9, 1832, Poinsett Mss.

ceived themselves or wish to deceive you." "The laws of the United States must be executed," said the President, "I have no discretionary power on the subject; my duty is emphatically pronounced in the Constitution. Those who told you that you might peaceably prevent their execution, deceived you; they could not have been deceived themselves. They know that a forcible opposition could alone prevent the execution of the laws, and they know that such opposition must be repelled. Their object is disunion. But be not deceived by names. Disunion by armed force is *treason*. Are you ready to incur its guilt?"¹

The nullification proclamation is written with a charm of logic and nicety of expression worthy of John Marshall. There is a persistent and widely accepted tradition that it was the work of Edward Livingston, who as secretary of state signed it with Jackson. Both its literary quality and its subtlety of reasoning show that at least the part relating to constitutional matters was not the work of the President. The closing part — the appeal to the South Carolinians — has much of his fire and suggests that he wrote it originally, but that its style was remodeled by him who wrote the former part. As a whole, the proclamation is one of the best papers of an American President and compares favorably with the inaugural addresses of Lincoln.

A letter to General Coffee, written December 14th, gives Jackson's views without Livingston's charm of statement. In it is the following:

Can any one of common sense believe the absurdity that a faction of any state, or a state, has a right to secede and destroy this union and the liberty of our country with it, or nullify the laws of the Union; then indeed is our constitution a rope of sand; under such I would not live. . . . This more perfect union made by the whole people of the United States, granted the general government certain powers, and retained others; but

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 640.

nowhere can it be found where the right to nullify a law, or to secede from this union has been retained by the state. No amendment can be made to the instrument, constitutionally, but in the mode pointed out in the constitution itself, every mode else is revolution or rebellion. The people are the sovereigns, they can alter and amend, and the people alone in the mode pointed out by themselves can dissolve this union peaceably. The right of resisting oppression is a natural right, and when oppression comes, the right of resistance and revolution are justifiable, but the moral obligations is binding upon all to fulfil the obligations as long as the compact is executed agreeable to the terms of the agreement. Therefore, when a faction in a state attempts to nullify a constitutional law of congress, or to destroy the union, the balance of the people composing this union have a perfect right to coerce them to obedience. This is my creed, which you will read in the proclamation which I sent you the other day. No man will go farther than I will to preserve every right reserved to the people, or the states; nor no man will go farther to sustain the acts of congress passed according to the express grants to congress. The union must be preserved, and it will now be tested, by the support I get by the people. I will die for the union."¹

In this letter we find no mental subtlety and but the simplest ideas of constitutional law; but in strength of will and devotion to the union it is splendid.

The response of the states,² about which he was anxious, was soon seen to be all that could be desired. One after another they sent assurances of support, and later came resolutions from states north and south condemning nullification as a doctrine and as an expedient. There could be no doubt that if the matter came to the worst, ample forces would be ready to suppress the nullifiers. In forty days, Jackson said, he could throw fifty

¹*American Historical Magazine* (Nashville), IV., 236.

²For responses of the states and other documents on this subject, see Ames, *State Documents on Federal Relations*, 164-190.

thousand men into South Carolina and forty days thereafter as many more.¹

The attention of both the administration and South Carolina was especially directed toward Georgia and Virginia. Between the position of the former in regard to the Indians² and that of the nullifiers there was much in common. Jackson feared that she would go over to the new heresy and foresaw that if he had a clash with her on that account, she would be ranged on the side of South Carolina in the larger quarrel. He urged the Georgia congressman and ex-Governor Troup to do all they could to avoid a clash and to Governor Lumpkins wrote, "My great desire is that you should do no act that would give to the Federal Court a legal jurisdiction, over a case that might arise with the Cherokee Indians;" and he begged Lumpkins to believe in "my continued confidence and respect, in which, you may always confide, until you hear otherwise from my own lips, all rumors to the contrary notwithstanding."³ Under the circumstances, Georgia owed it to Jackson to remain quiet, and her attitude in the crisis of the winter was all that could be expected. Her legislature was content to pass resolutions calling for a convention of the states to amend the constitution in regard to the point in question.

Virginia was important on account of her influence. To the earnest entreaties of South Carolina her reply was resolutions in which she professed entire loyalty to the resolves of 1798 and 1799, and the dispatch of an agent, B. W. Leigh, to urge the nullifiers to suspend their ordinance until congress adjourned. He arrived after February 1st, but what he asked had been done before that time. A group of prominent nullifiers, acting informally, in Charleston, on January 21st, approved certain resolutions advising the officers of government that it would not be well to enforce the ordinance at present and pledging themselves

¹Jackson to Poinsett, December 9, 1832, Poinsett Mss.

²Jackson to Lumpkins, June 22, 1832, Jackson Mss.

³See below, pages 684-692

to fulfil the program of nullification if at the end of a reasonable time the demands of the state were not granted. The resolutions were extra legal, sensible, and effective. February 1st came and went without conflict, and the federal officers continued to collect duties in the Charleston custom-house without opposition.

Meantime, the state was greatly excited. The unionists were actively preparing for an encounter, though careful to do all in their power to prevent one through some rash deed. The nullifiers were equally self-restrained in regard to actual fighting. But each side prepared arms and ammunition, drilled its supporters, and kept watch on its antagonist. Jackson was kept informed of all that was done and was keen for a struggle. His fighting blood was up, and he threw aside all that caution which he displayed earlier in the movement. "The moment they are in hostile array in opposition to the execution of the laws," he wrote, "let it be certified to me, by the atty. for the District or the *Judge*, and I will forthwith order the leaders prosecuted and arrested. If the Marshall is resisted by twelve thousand bayonets, I will have a possee of twenty-four thousand." While the "force bill" was before congress, he wrote: "Should congress fail to act on the bill and I should be informed of the illegal assemblage of an armed force with the intention to oppose the execution of the revenue laws under the late ordinance of So. Carolina, I stand prepared forthwith to issue my proclamation warning them to disperse. Should they fail to comply with the proclamation, I will forthwith call into the field such a force as will overawe resistance, put treason and rebellion down without blood, and arrest and hand over to the judiciary for trial and punishment the leaders, excitors and promoters of this rebellion and treason." He had a tender of volunteers from every state in the union and could bring two hundred thousand into the field within forty days. Should the governor of Virginia, he

¹Jackson to Poinsett, January 16, 1833, Poinsett MSS.

said, have the folly to forbid the passage of troops through his state to the scene of treason "I would arrest him at the head of his troops and hand him over to the civil authority for trial. The volunteers of his own state would enable me to do this."¹

When Jackson sent his proclamation to Poinsett in December, he said he was only waiting for certified copies of the acts of the South Carolina legislature putting nullification into force in order to ask congress for power to enforce the proclamation and punish the leaders of the rebellion.² This information did not come, and unwilling to wait longer than January 16th, he sent to congress on that day, a special message asking for authority to alter or abolish certain ports of entry, to use force to execute the revenue law, and to try in the federal courts cases which might arise in the present contingency. Five days later, a bill in accord with these requests was introduced in the senate by Wilkins, of Pennsylvania. It was popularly called the "force bill," but the nullifiers expressed their horror by styling it the "bloody bill." There was much opposition to it; for many who were not nullifiers, were unwilling to coerce a state.

The situation brought genuine alarm to the managers of the Jacksonian democracy. It was not possible to tell how much the Calhoun defection would weaken the party. The last stages of the fight against the bank were approaching when the administration would need all its resources. Moreover, the tariff wave was receding. It had been partly due to the enthusiasm of the rural North and West for "the American system" through which, it was believed, cities, better transportation, and rich and prosperous farming communities would soon spring up. This was an unwarranted expectation, and the moment of elation was passing. Many politicians of the old republican school yielded to the tariff unwillingly and at the first intimation of recession

¹Jackson to Poinsett, January 24, 1833, Poinsett Mss.

²*Ibid* to *Ibid*, December 9, 1832, Poinsett Mss.

supported the reaction. From all these causes the time favored compromise.

Before congress met the administration was prepared to take a milder position on the tariff. The approaching extinction of the public debt, which would give a surplus, made revision seem necessary. December 13th, in a letter in the *Richmond Inquirer*, a close friend of the government, probably Cass, secretary of war, suggested that Virginia propose a reduction of the tariff. This was better than a suggestion in the annual message, since such a course would tend to turn from the President the protectionist group. December 27th, the house committee of ways and means, through its chairman, Verplanck, of New York, introduced a new tariff bill, reducing the duties in two years to about half of the former rates. It was prepared by Cass, Verplanck, and other administration friends, but was especially supported by the New York school, who following suggestions from South Carolina, were willing to have their favorite appear as "pacificator."¹ Its appearance aroused strong hostility from the protectionists, and not all the New York democrats could be got to vote for it. It was too drastic a reduction for the circumstances, and it stuck in the house so long that Van Buren's opponents had the opportunity to pass a bill less injurious to the manufacturers; and in doing so, they gave the honor of the compromise to another than he.

Clay came into the senate in December, 1831: early in January 1833, Calhoun, resigning the vice-presidency, took the seat in that body made vacant by the election of Hayne to the governorship of his native state. Each new senator smarted from defeat at Jackson's hands, each felt that Jackson was leading the country to misfortune, and each was bent on impeding the course of the destroyer. Early in the year it was noised abroad that they were in alliance against the administration. In regard to the

¹Cambreleng to Van Buren, December 29, 1832, and February 5, 1833, Van Buren Mss.

"force bill" the Kentuckian was chiefly silent. He would not fight the battles of the state rights advocates, not even to embarrass Jackson, nor would he help suppress nullification. In the final vote on the bill, he did not respond on either side. His energy was saved for the tariff.

But Calhoun was deeply engaged as soon as the "force bill" appeared in the senate. He offered resolutions in support of his theory of government, and when the senate brushed them aside, he plunged into the acrid debate with all his energy. In the beginning it was evident that the extreme state right democrats found the bill very disagreeable. Jackson was forced to see a division in his own ranks. "There are more nullifiers here," he said, "than dare openly avow it," but he did not doubt they would be good Jackson men at home.¹

If his enemies had combined with the disaffected in his own party the bill might have been defeated. But they could no more combine in this way than the radical state rights men could support a bill to give the President the authority to suppress a state. Webster has been praised for coming to the defense of the bill. It would have been entirely captious for him to oppose it. He could hardly break down Hayne's nullification arguments in 1830 and refuse in 1833 to create the means necessary to put his own views into execution. But his aid was splendidly rendered and most effective. He brought the anti-Jacksonians with him, and these, with the loyal Jackson followers, made the bill safe in the senate.

Before it could pass Calhoun withdrew his opposition in consequence of Clay's concession on the tariff. February 12th the father of the "American system," while Verplanck's bill was still in the house, arose in the senate and offered a compromise tariff of his own. It proposed that for all articles which paid more than 20 per cent. duty the surplus above that rate

¹Jackson to Cryer, February 20, 1833, *American Historical Magazine* (Nashville), IV., 237.

should be gradually reduced until in 1842 it should entirely disappear. Verplanck would have reduced duties within two years by half: Clay would do it in ten years to a 20 per cent. basis. The latter plan was less violent than the former and was preferred by the manufacturers, if either must be taken. This was all that South Carolina contended for. Nullification was the club with which she sought to ward off a danger, and that danger gone she willingly threw the club away: she protested from the first that she disliked to use it. When the vote on the "force bill" was taken Calhoun and his followers left the chamber. Obstinate John Tyler would not run away, and he loved state rights too much to support the bill. He, therefore, remained in his seat and cast the only negative against thirty-two affirmative votes. In the house the bill passed in much the same manner, John Quincy Adams leading the anti-Jackson party in favor of the measure.

Clay's part of the compromise was adroitly played. His bill was opposed in the senate because it was unconstitutional for a revenue bill to originate in that chamber. He then arranged through much quiet work to have it substituted for the Verplanck bill in the other house, which through the opposition of the tariff party was not likely to pass at that session. February 25th, in the afternoon as the house was about to adjourn for dinner, Letcher, of Kentucky, Clay's fast friend, arose and moved the substitution of bills. After a short debate the change was made and the bill ordered engrossed for the third reading by a vote of one hundred and five to seventy-one. The tariff men were surprised, but the administration party were previously informed of the plan. They rallied to the proposition as part of the compromise by which the South Carolina crisis was to be removed from the stage of action. The thing was done so quickly, said Benton, that the hot dinners of the representatives were eaten before the food became cold.¹

¹Benton, *Views*, I., 300-312.

Van Buren's friends were shocked. All the honor of pacification to which they looked through the Verplanck bill were suddenly snatched away by Clay. They thought a trick was played on them and Cambreleng complained that everybody seemed to be against New York.¹ He was nearly right: except for Jackson himself, very few of the leaders in Washington seemed to care to help the New Yorker to the goal of his ambition.

Although the South Carolinians resisted the passage of the "force bill" to their uttermost, they accepted the compromise. Their convention reassembled March 11th to consider the situation. It repealed the ordinance nullifying the tariff laws of the union and passed another nullifying the "force bill." The latter step was ridiculous, but it saved the face of the nullifying party and enabled it to claim complete victory. No one, within the state or out of it, was disposed to deny them this comfort. Most people were glad to be rid of an unpromising situation — the politicians because they had other affairs to arrange, and the people because they loved peace and feared disunion.

Jackson alone of his party seems to have looked beyond the political significance of the situation. In spite of his latent feeling of protest, he temporized along with the others until the nullification ordinance was passed. This action he took as a challenge, and leading his unwilling followers he committed his party to the cause of union. His letters to Poinsett and the replies to them show well the conditions in South Carolina. But the Van Buren correspondence at this period — the letters of party lieutenants to Van Buren and those which passed between him and Jackson — show the political side.

The nullification proclamation, as it was the first note of Jackson's more energetic programme, was the first sign for dissatisfaction among his followers. They disliked its national tone

¹Cambreleng to Van Buren, February 5, 1833, Van Buren Mss.

which Cambreleng pronounced "the metaphysics of the Montesquieu of the Cabinet." To the mass of people, he said, this would make no difference; they would see only an endangered union, whereas "the speculations are left for refinements of those who are only capable of transferring the special pleading of chancery into the councils of statesmen."¹

The listlessness of the party in the face of disunion is another illustration of the divergence between its attitude and that of the President. The day before the date of the proclamation Michael Hoffman, a New York congressman, described the situation to Van Buren. He thought the ways and means committee would be satisfactory on every bank question, and that on the tariff it would not adopt South Carolina's equalizing ultimatum; but "meanwhile South Carolina will rush on *in furorem*. The President will march against her, civil war will rage, and the poor fools who can see no danger now, will be frightened out, not of their wits, for they have none, but out of their folly. How they will behave then I cannot anticipate, for when their folly is gone, there will be nothing left of them." He added that General Scott thought the situation very delicate.²

A week later so valiant a person as Benton wrote that everybody was concerned to prevent the beginning of bloodshed in South Carolina, that there was talk of an extra session of congress in the spring, and that all agreed peace would come if Jackson's suggestion in his message of a more moderate tariff were adopted, but the existing congress would not support this.³ This idea found support in Cambreleng's terse forecast: "We shall do nothing," he wrote "but project tariffs this winter — while the Legislature will talk of a convention of states. We shall have some riots in Charleston, some bloodshed perhaps; some stormy debating in congress in February and the new congress will

¹Cambreleng to Van Buren, December 10, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

²Hoffman to Van Buren, December 9, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

³Benton to Van Buren, December 16, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

have to act and supersede the necessity of a convention.”¹ In no letter in either the Jackson or Van Buren correspondence is there evidence that any other leader in his party felt the same impulse that Jackson felt to crush resistance and enforce the authority of the union.

These alarms were poured into the ear of Van Buren, who as vice-president-elect remained decently at Albany until March 4th. With characteristic, and probably necessary, caution he approached Jackson on the subject. Our people are restive, he said, because the opposition try to interpret some parts of the proclamation as a condemnation of the state rights doctrine of the West and South. They find difficulty in holding meetings, and there is a disposition to say harsh things, which is unfortunate. Great discretion is necessary in New York on account of the diversity of tariff opinion and of feelings engendered in the late election. This he said in substance, closing with the assurance that he would do what he could to keep things on the right course.²

Jackson's reply took little notice of Van Buren's warning but dwelt on the imminence of armed force. The moment the nullifiers raised an army, he said, he would issue a proclamation telling them to disperse and give the marshal troops enough to suppress them. He would arrest the leaders and turn them over to the United States courts for trial. He referred to Virginia's late reassertion of the doctrine of 1798, saying:

The absurdity of the Virginia doctrine is too plain to need much comment. If they would say, that the state had a right to fight, and if she has the power, to revolution, it would be right but at the same time it must be acknowledged, that the other states have equal rights, and the right to preserve the union. The preservation of the union is the supreme law. To shew the

¹Cambreleng to Van Buren, December 9, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

²Van Buren to Jackson, December 22, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

absurdity — Congress have the right to admit new states. When territories the[y] are subject to the laws of the union; The day after admission they have the right to secede and dissolve it. We gave five millions for Louisiana. We admitted her into the union. She too has the right to secede, close the commerce of six states, and levy contributions both upon exports and imports. A state cannot come into the union without the consent of congress, but it can go out when it pleases. Such a union as this would be like a bag of sand with both ends open — the least pressure and it runs out at both ends. It is an insult to the understanding of the sages who formed it, to believe that such a union was ever intended. It could not last a month. It is a confederated perpetual union, first made by the people in their sovereign state capacities, upon which we the people of these United States made a more perfect union, which can only be dissolved by the people who formed it, and in the way pointed out in the instrument, or by revolution.¹

Van Buren's anxiety was not allayed by this vigorous utterance and he wrote again. He agreed that there should be no faltering now, but warned his friend that merely passing an act to raise a military force was not treason and that constructive treason was unpopular in the United States. He advised Jackson to ask only for force to execute the laws. He knew the latter would say that this was the writer's old trick of saying, "‘caution, caution’; but my dear sir, I have always thought that considering our respective temperaments, there is no way perhaps in which I could better render you that service which I owe you as well from a sense of deep gratitude as public duty." He added that Virginia was much concerned over the proclamation that he did not think South Carolina would secede but if such a thing happened Virginia would desire the remaining states to decide whether they would form a new union without

¹Jackson to Van Buren, December 25, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

the seceder or wage war to retain her in the union. The best solution he saw was the modification of the tariff.¹

Other letters followed from the same writer, but a fortnight passed before they were answered by the busy Jackson. This reply showed unexpected self-control. It was necessary, he said, to protect good citizens and federal officers in South Carolina who might fall under the state's laws of vengeance; and as to the tariff, it was necessary to think of both ends of the union; for New England, protected by the tariff, might be as willing to secede if protection was abandoned as the South if it was not abandoned. Nullification and secession must be put down once for all: he must give congress full notice of the danger so that it could act before February 1st, or he would be chargeable with neglect of duty. "I will meet all things with deliberate firmness and forbearance, but wo to those nullifiers who shed the first blood. The moment I am prepared with proof I will direct prosecution for treason to be instituted against the leaders, and if they are surrounded with 12,000 bayonets our marshal shall be aided by 24,000 and arrest them in the midst thereof. Nothing must be permitted to weaken our government at home or abroad. Virginia, except a few nullifiers and politicians, is true to the core. I could march from that State 40,000 men in forty days. Nay they are ready in North Carolina, in Tennessee, in all western States, and from good old democratic Pennsylvania I have a tender of upwards of 50,000; and from the borders of South Carolina in North Carolina I have a tender of one entire Regiment. The union shall be preserved."²

On the day Jackson wrote this determined letter, Silas Wright wrote in another strain to Van Buren. Everything, he said, was at stake, even the union as well as "our most favorite political hopes and prospects." For the time he seems to have forgot-

¹Van Buren to Jackson, December 27, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

²Jackson to Van Buren, January 13, 1833, and Cambreleng to Van Buren, December 26, 1832, Van Buren Mss.

ten that all his hope consisted in sticking close to that leader who alone could carry into safety the head of the New York group. In consternation he demanded that Van Buren tell him how to vote on the Verplanck bill, he admitted that he had never voted from conviction on the tariff question, but from expediency, and declared himself willing to do it again. As to others, "the President is very well and cool, calm, and collected, but very firm and decided as to the use of force. As to the sustention of his position that a state cannot secede he is very sensitive, and even abuses mildly Mr. Ritchie." The secretary of war was "highly excited" and McLane in the treasury department, "is much more so."¹

Jackson's keen observation of the situation did not relax and for the next month the politicians tried to find a way out of the labyrinth. The postponement of the execution of the nullification ordinance seemed only to delay the day when he must strike rebellion. By this time he had lost most of his interest in the attempt to settle the tariff question; and when Clay's compromise was introduced he was quick to resent the prospect that it should take precedence of the "force bill." "I am just informed," he wrote hastily to Grundy on the night of April 13th, "that there will be another move to lay the judiciary ['force'] bill on the table until Mr. Clay's tariff bill is discussed. Surely you and all my friends will push that bill through the senate. This is due the country, it is due to me, and to the safety of this union and surely you and others of the committee who reported it will never let it slumber one day until it passes the senate. Lay all delicacy on this subject aside and compel every man's name to appear upon the journals that the nullifiers may *all* be distinguished from those who are in support of the laws, and the union."² His efforts were not successful. His

¹Wright to Van Buren, January 13, 1833, Van Buren MSS.

²Jackson to Grundy, February 13, 1833, *American Historical Magazine*, (Nashville), V., 137.

bill—in the letter to Grundy he calls it “my bill” — passed the senate before Clay’s compromise tariff bill, but they both reached Jackson for signature on the same day. It must have made him feel that it was worth little to provide a means of checking the pretensions of a wilful state while giving it at the same time the object for which its wilfulness was exerted. Nullification was South Carolina’s weapon. Using it successfully in 1833 showed how it could be used and established her prestige in the practice. Had the desires of Jackson been supported by a less timid group of politicians state rights might now have been broken and a sterner struggle in the succeeding generation might have been avoided.

It is difficult to give Clay and Calhoun their just places in this affair, so well are mingled selfish and apparently sincere motives; it is easier to praise Webster, although when he fought for the union he but stood where he stood before; but as regards the President there can be no such hesitation. He forsook his old position, cast aside the formulas of his party, and declared for the union when it was in danger. His political philosophy was a simple one, when put to the test. It embraced obedience to his authority, hatred of monopoly, and courage to carry out his purposes. The first and the third united to shape his course on nullification: the second and third united to direct it in the next great crisis of his career, the struggle against the Second United States Bank.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE UNITED STATES BANK — BEGINNING THE FIGHT FOR RE-CHARTER

SO FAR this account of Jackson's administration has been chiefly concerned with the evolution of the Jacksonian party. In 1824, one man's popularity boldly utilized, drew together a vast number of voters. To them were joined the groups by Crawford, Calhoun, and Clinton, each fully supplied with politicians of all grades. When the party came into power it was a group of factions which slowly became an organic unit. The alignment of interests into the Calhoun and Van Buren groups, the exclusion of the opponents of Van Buren from the cabinet, the identification of the New Yorker with the original Tennessee following, the formation of a cabinet devoted to this faction, the clever elimination of Calhoun until he was forced into party rebellion, and finally the escape from a struggle with the South at the instance of South Carolina whereby the party might be rent in twain; these were the chief steps in the process of unification, and each has been explained at length.

At the head of this array stood Jackson, probably stronger through his forceful personality than any other American since Washington. He was no economist, no financier, no intelligent seeker after wise and just ideals, and his temper and judgment were bad; but his will was the coherent force of a party organization more complicated, and yet better adjusted, than existed before that time in our government. Courage, knowledge of the people, simplicity of manner, the common man's ideal of honesty and patriotism, and a willingness to discipline his sub-

ordinates when necessary were the qualities which kept the party organization effective. "Jackson's popularity will stand anything," said his friends in expressing their confidence in his leadership. His opponents said he was drunk with power. Popular hero or tyrant he was now, in the years 1832 and 1833, come to the supreme test of his strength, the open fight against the bank.

The Second Bank of the United States was chartered in 1816, to continue for twenty years with one year more to close its affairs. The capital was thirty-five millions, one fifth subscribed by the government. This subscription was paid in a note at 5 per cent. interest, and it was believed that the dividends and the rise in the value of the stock would bring the public treasury a good profit on the transaction. A board of twenty-five directors, one fifth appointed by the President of the United States, selected the bank's administrative officers, created branches with local boards of directors, invested the bank's funds, and provided for its other business. Foreign stockholders were not to vote for directors and frequent reports must be made by the bank to the secretary of the treasury.

The most important other features of the charter were as follows: (1) The bank might issue notes without restriction, but they must all be signed by the president of the institution and must be redeemed in specie under penalty of paying 12 per cent. interest per annum on notes for which specie was refused. (2) Its notes were receivable for government dues, a privilege extended to notes of state banks only when they were redeemed in specie. (3) It kept the public deposits without interest, a valuable privilege in the prosperous years during which the charter ran. (4) It was to pay a bonus of one and a half millions and to transfer public funds without cost to the government. (5) The secretary of the treasury might remove the deposits from the bank, but he should "immediately lay before congress, if

in session, and if not, immediately after the commencement of the next session, the reasons for such order or direction." But was congress then to pass on the reasons submitted? And would the deposits be restored if it did not approve? On this point the charter was not so clear that it escaped much later controversy.¹

The size and privileges of the bank gave it power over other banks, and such was the intention of congress. It received large quantities of state bank-notes and by presenting them for redemption forced the banks of issue to maintain adequate specie reserves and to refrain from overissue. No single state bank or possible combination of them was able to exercise the same influence over the great bank, which was thus able to appropriate to itself much of the volume of new bank-notes which the business of the country demanded. This, probably, was its most pronounced monopolistic feature.

The bank inevitably had the opposition of the state banks, and since the latter were connected with local politics it became an issue in state politics. Bad management and the panic of 1819 made it necessary to take over large quantities of real estate, especially in the West, and when this was later sold at an advance the former owners gnashed their teeth. "I know towns, yea cities, . . . where the bank," said Benton in 1831, "already appears as an engrossing proprietor." Out of this hostility of the people and the politicians grew state legislation intended to check or destroy the federal incorporated institution. The bank was saved by the interference of the supreme court. In two cases, *McCulloch vs. Maryland* (1819) and *Osborn vs. the Bank* (1824), it was held that a state had no power over a bank incorporated by congress. Thus baffled, popular hostility receded but did not die. It survived in local differences, and when Jackson raised his voice against the bank it came to

¹For the charter, see *United States Statutes at Large*, III., 266.

his aid. Some of his strongest supporters, as Amos Kendall and Frank P. Blair, of Kentucky, were warm in the early fight to restrain that institution.

Nicholas Biddle was president of the bank when it completed this victory. He graduated at Princeton, became a lawyer, dabbled in literature, and at length was secretary of legation in London and Paris. In 1819, through political influence, he was appointed government director of the bank. He knew something of political economy and now gave himself to the study of banking, of which his active mind soon achieved the mastery. He was a man of personal power, came to dominate the board of directors, and in 1823 was elected president to succeed Langdon Cheves. He quickly became the controlling force in the institution.

When Cheves became president in 1819 bankruptcy was imminent. He adopted a severe policy, curtailed loans, collected debts without regard to persons, and brought affairs again to a safe condition. But he made himself unpopular and his resignation gave pleasure to the bank's patrons. Biddle profited by the reaction. He increased loans moderately, enlarged the note issues, and made some slight concessions to the state banks. Business generally was good, and results justified his liberality. He reorganized the branches, got better directors as opportunity offered, and adopted better banking methods. Dividends increased and the bank's stock became more valuable.

Besides having many sober qualities Biddle was bold and imaginative. In the beginning he restrained these impulses, but as success came he gave them freer play. Holding down the issues of state banks as much as his favored position permitted, he enlarged his own circulation from four and a half millions in 1823 to twenty-one millions in 1832. This caused dissatisfaction on the part of the competing banks, but it was not like him to turn aside on account of his opponents. He had much latent

pride, he loved his own power, and soon became the chief force in the administration of the bank. He was allowed to control the selection of the private directors, the appointment of the committees, and thus he became, as was inevitable with a strong man, the centre of the bank's policy as truly as Jackson was the dominant force in the national government. When his will was limited by his opponents his resourcefulness was apt to find some way to circumvent them, as was shown in the case of the branch drafts.

These drafts came into existence in the following manner: In developing his policy of restraining overissue of state banks he wished to put out large amounts of his own notes. But the charter provided that he and his cashier must sign all such notes, and it was a severe tax on his physical strength to sign as many as were needed. Four times before his term of office the bank asked that this feature of the charter be amended, but congress always refused, probably because they desired to use this peculiarity of the law to restrain the issue of the bank. Biddle construed it as an act of pique. A cautious man would have yielded, but not he. He invented the branch draft, in size, design, and coloring so much like a bank-note that the average man took it for one. It was drawn by the branch on the mother bank in Philadelphia and made payable to some subordinate of the branch, or order. The subordinate endorsed it, and it became transferable. These drafts were received without question by the bank and the public and until 1835 by the government itself. They were not illegal and they were all redeemed by the bank; but they were a subterfuge and the anti-bank group declared that they were a practical violation of the charter.

Biddle could not have kept the bank out of politics, and he probably did not expect to do it. The fact that its charter must be renewed made the question a political one. The general revival of state rights theories had its bearing, and the personnel

of the bank's management had an influence on the question; for men of dignity and wealth, as were the directors and officers, naturally opposed Jackson's election. On the other hand, wherever the anti-bank party existed it as naturally turned to Jackson. In Kentucky and New Hampshire this was particularly true. Biddle understood the situation, but observing that the opposition came from the less intelligent portion of the Jackson supporters, he hoped he could by reasonable methods carry his cause through congress. He could count on all the Adams men and on the followers of Calhoun. His chief trouble would come from old-school followers of Crawford and from the Jacksonian democrats, not a very formidable combination. Biddle looked upon it as a group inspired by ignorance and prejudice, and he felt that it would yield before the intelligence which he could bring to bear on the matter. His expectations would in all probability have been accomplished but for the opposition of Andrew Jackson.

We know little of Jackson's early attitude on the subject, but all we know marks him for an opponent in one way or another. In 1817 "the aristocracy at Nashville," as he later called it, tried to secure the establishment of a branch in the town. They encountered a state law forbidding a bank without a state charter, but got it repealed in spite of the opposition of Jackson and many others.¹ Later in the same year he refused on constitutional grounds to sign a memorial for such a branch; but he was willing to recommend certain men for officers in the branch, not as an endorsement of the institution but as a testimonial of the character of the persons.²

In New Orleans in 1821 when about to assume the office of governor of Florida he asked the branch in that city to cash a draft on the state department for ten or fifteen thousand dollars

¹The date of this recommendation was formerly given as 1827, but Catterall correctly places it as 1817; See *Second Bank of the United States*, 183.

²Jackson to Benton, November 29, 1837, Jackson Mss.

and was refused because at that time the parent bank had ordered that drafts should not be cashed. The incident annoyed him. He could have got the money by selling a draft to brokers in the city, but he said he would never discount his government's bills, "and more particularly to the branch bank of the United States, in which is deposited all the revenue of the government received in this place."¹

In 1821, while governor of Florida, he forwarded a petition for a branch at Pensacola. Opponents later took this to indicate that he then favored the bank; but he replied with evident truthfulness that in sending the petition he merely acted for others and was not committed to support the request. There is no evidence to show that his bank views changed after his election. On the contrary such facts as we have go to support his plain assertion made in 1837: "My position now is, and has ever been since I have been able to form an opinion on this subject, that Congress has no power to charter a Bank, and that the states are prohibited from issuing bills of credit, or granting a charter by which such bills can be issued by any corporation or order."²

During the six years throughout which Jackson was before the country as presidential candidate nothing happened to show his views on this question. But the increasing certainty that he would be President made him an object of interest to the bank. In 1827 a branch was created at Nashville and thither came Gen. Thomas Cadwalader, of Philadelphia, agent of the bank, to supervise its establishment. He became acquainted with Jackson, and the two corresponded after the agent's return to Philadelphia. Cadwalader's letters are filled with insinuating friendliness. In one he regrets that he cannot settle in Nashville, and he extends a warm invitation for Jackson and Mrs. Jackson

¹Jackson to Adams, April 24, 1821; *American State Papers, Foreign*, IV., 756.

²Jackson to Benton, November 29, 1837, Jackson MSS.

to visit Philadelphia. "Mrs. Cadwalader," he concludes, "desires me to say that no endeavor will be spared to supply to Mrs. J. the places of those warm friends whom she will leave behind her."¹

Election day had not quite arrived when he wrote in a pean of glorification that the Philadelphia contest went "right" and that Sergeant was defeated. Coming to the bank he said: "Having had a particular agency in selecting the first list of Directors of the office of the Bank in your Quarter, I feel very anxious to know how far public opinion approves of the administration." Complaint had come to him that the men were unpopular, that the president was selfish and had no influence out of his office, that relatives of the president were given unwarranted favors in borrowing, that G. W. Campbell was the only proper man on the board, and that under pretext of getting business men in office "our friend Major Lewis is removed in order to make way for a man recently accused and convicted (in public opinion) of fraud for a series of years by the use of false weights at his cotton gin." He closed by saying he should be grateful if Jackson would convey any useful information on this subject to him, either personally or as a director in the parent bank.²

Nothing could be plainer than this offer to hand the Nashville branch over to the Jackson party; the reply was creditable to the writer of it. "Never having been," said Jackson with dignity, "in any manner, connected with Banks, and having very little to do with the one here, I feel myself unable to give you any satisfaction about it." The directors, he added, were reputed honest men, most of them were Europeans who had recently settled in the neighborhood, and some were young men who were under obligations to the president of the branch. He had heard complaints but could not say whether they were true or not, but "if it is any part of the policy of the mother bank to conciliate

¹Cadwalder to Jackson, June 21, 1828, Jackson Mss.

²Cadwalder to Jackson, October 15, 1828, Jackson Mss.

the states and make their Branches acceptable to the people, then I think a portion of their board at least, should have been composed of men better known, and possessing more extensive influence than most of the directory of the Bank at Nashville do.”¹ Here were both dignity and policy.

Polk assures us that in the winter before the first inauguration Jackson talked freely to his friends at the “Hermitage” about his opposition to the bank. The President’s own recollection of the matter supported Polk in the assertion that a declaration against the bank was incorporated in the first draft of the inaugural address, probably an early, rough draft, from which the intended matter was dropped at the suggestion of friends.²

Soon after the inauguration Jackson returned to the subject, writing to Grundy in regard to a national bank scheme. The latter had long been interested in banks, being the author of the Tennessee law of 1820 creating a loan office.³ What he said to Grundy is not preserved, but the latter said in his reply: “On the subject of the National Bank you have in view — I admire the project and believe that the president of the U. States, who shall accomplish it, will have achieved more for his country, than has ever been effected by any act of legislation, since the foundation of the government. I will furnish as early as I can my views at large on that subject, agreeably to your request.”

Five months later Grundy sent an outline plan of a bank with a capital stock of forty millions based on the national revenues, half of the capital to be owned by the states in proportion to population, the rest to be owned by the federal government, and the central directors to be elected by congress. The plan had little influence, perhaps not as much as a suggestion of John Randolph’s which probably reached Jackson about the

¹Jackson to Cadwalader, November 16, 1828, Jackson Mss.

²See above, II., 430. See also *Congressional Debates*, X., Part II., 2263.

³Sumner, *Life of Jackson* (edition 1899), 153, 159.

⁴Grundy to Jackson, May 22, 1829, Jackson Mss.

end of December, 1829. In 1811, said he, he prepared a plan of a bank to take the place of the first bank: it was to be attached to the customs of the government and the great custom-houses were to be branches to keep and pay out funds.¹

While Jackson thus thought of the bank from the standpoint of principles, some of his party managers considered it from a practical side. They charged, and they probably believed, that it took active part in politics in several states in the election of 1828. The charge seems to have been true to some extent in Kentucky. The victors were hardly in the saddle before they began to talk openly about their wrongs. They may have intended to frighten the bank, with the object of lessening its partiality for the opposition and of getting members of their own party appointed directors. The result showed that Biddle was not proof against their designs.

The incident which best served them was the charges against strong-willed Jeremiah Mason, president of the Portsmouth, N. H., branch, and friend of Daniel Webster. Isaac Hill, leader of the rural wing of the Jackson party there, charged that Mason discriminated against administration men in making loans, that he was cold in his manner and generally unpopular. The complaint was made to Ingham, secretary of the treasury, in June, 1829, and he sent it to Biddle. About the same time Biddle received complaints directly from Senator Woodbury with other protests of the same nature, and he concluded the situation demanded serious consideration. But he made the initial mistake of getting angry. He wrote two letters on the same day, July 18, 1829, explaining in one of them the situation in Portsmouth. This was calmly stated and made a good showing for Mason. But in the other he undertook to defend the bank from the imputation of partisanship. There were not, he thought, another five hundred persons in the country so free

¹Randolph to J. H. Burton, December 12, 1829, Jackson MSS.

from politics as those who directed the affairs of the bank and its branches. He was confident of his position, and as for the demands of those enemies he made by refusing credit, he felt that "even in the worst event, it is better to encounter hostility, than appease it by unworthy sacrifices of duty."

It was indiscreet to open this phase of the affair; for it gave Ingham an opportunity to shift the correspondence from the facts and to rest it where he could appeal to party feeling. In his reply he nearly ignored the first of the two letters but turned to the other eagerly. He said:

While I would scrupulously forbear to assume any fact derogatory to the character of your board or those of the branches, it is not deemed incompatible with the most rigid justice, to suppose that any body of five hundred men, not selected by an Omniscient eye, cannot be fairly entitled to the unqualified testimony which you have been pleased to offer in their behalf. It is morally impossible that the character of all the acts of the directors of the branches, much less their motives, could be known to the parent board; hence, the declaration that "no loan was ever granted to, or withheld from an individual, on account of political partiality or hostility," must be received rather as evidence of your own feelings, than as conclusive proof of the fact so confidently vouched for.

In closing Ingham reiterated his right to keep an eye on the bank's relation to politics, said he knew this would be attributed to false motives, but that he should do his duty as an officer of the government.

Before Biddle replied to this the Portsmouth investigation was ended in Mason's favor. Reporting this, he added, as though he could not resist the temptation to argue:

Your predecessors, Mr. Morris, General Hamilton, Mr. Wolcott, Mr. Gallatin, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Dallas, Mr. Crawford,

and Mr. Rush, were gentlemen of acknowledged intelligence and fidelity to their duty. Yet, neither during the existence of the first Bank of the United States, even when there were no government directors, nor since the existence of the present bank, nor in the interval between them, does it seem even to have occurred to them that it formed any part of their duties to enquire into the political opinions of officers of the banks in which public funds were deposited.

Analyzing and construing the secretary's letter he alleged that it contained three false assumptions: (1) that the treasury could influence the election of bank officials, (2) that there was "some unexplained but authorized action of the government on the bank" of which the secretary was the proper agent, and (3) that he could and should make suggestions in regard to the attitude of the bank toward political matters.

This letter was undiplomatic. Aggression was not Biddle's cue, but he did not know it. Like most of his class, he had contempt for these new politicians who rode into power under cover of popular enthusiasm for a war-lord. He believed they dared not attack so powerful an institution as the bank. He did not realize until too late the immense strength of popular feeling as embodied in the new party.

Ingham showed a better comprehension of the situation. He denied flatly the first and third of his correspondent's assertions but assented to the second. The relation of the bank to the currency, the credit, and the political life of the country gave him, he said, the right to enquire into the actions of the institution. And he added significantly, speaking of himself as the secretary of the treasury:

Before he can be tempted to exercise the authority with which Congress have invested him, to withdraw the public deposits, he will do as he has done, submit directly to your board whatever imputation may be made, and respectfully,

resolutely, and confidently ask, nay demand, the fullest examination; and he trusts that he may not be misconceived when he adds, that nothing could, in his opinion, more imperatively exact this energetic movement than a well formulated conviction of the bank's being, as was said of its predecessor, an engine of political party.

He also said, and it was with clearer political wisdom than Biddle's:

I must premise, notwithstanding the peculiar incredulity shown to similar [previous] assurances, that no wish is, or ever has been, felt by me, to convert or attach the influence of the bank to any political party, but, on the contrary, speaking with "unreserved freedom," although in the joint discharge of public functions, comity and co-operation cannot be too much cultivated; in the arena of party conflict which you almost tempt me to believe unavoidable, the hostility of the bank, as a political engine, would be preferable to its amity.

Biddle submitted this letter, like the others, to his board of directors. They evidently realized to what a state of irritation the affair was tending and at their behest he wrote that as the secretary disclaimed the views attributed to him they were satisfied, and he withdrew their protest against those views.¹

This ended the incident. In it the administration showed its teeth, probably all it intended to do in the beginning. Biddle showed, also, his method of opposition: it was incautious, over-sanguine, and liable to underestimate the strength of popular feeling against the bank. But reflection lessened pugnacity, and before the correspondence closed various administration men were appointed directors in the branches. For all his strong words Biddle bent easily to necessity; and not persistence so much as bad judgment accomplished his defeat.

¹This controversy is described, and the correspondence is published, in *Reports of Committees*, 1st session, 32nd congress, Volume IV., 437, *et seq.*

Jackson took no part in this affair, although he must have watched it keenly. An extract from Biddle's letter of September 15th, was sent to him and on the back we read in Jackson's hand: "Biddle's letter. Repeats their good feelings to the administration and their great aid offered to it in the payment of the late sum of the public debt? Why this so often mentioned? Answer for political effect — and newspaper slang &c.?. . . The act of Congress their guide — true, but if that charter is violated is there no power in the government to inquire and correct if true. . . . See answer. The reply as to the purity of the Branch directors *well said*."¹ This endorsement in Jackson's own hand shows that in the autumn of 1829 he was keenly alive to the political activity of the bank and on the whole suspicious and hostile.

Biddle knew not Jackson's feelings and was already planning to make the administration his friend. October 14th, while his correspondence with Ingham was in progress, Biddle was writing to Lewis, on whom he relied for influence with the administration, seeking to establish an understanding with the President. He desired his letter shown to Jackson, which was done. Lewis, who was friendly to the bank, replied hopefully, asserting that the latter had high esteem for Biddle personally and saying that politics should not enter into the management of the institution. Biddle also sent friends to Washington to assure the head of the government that reports of political discrimination in the branches were exaggerated. By this means and by placing Jackson men on the directorates of some of the branches he felt that this danger was passed. He even asked Lewis to induce the President to speak favorably in the annual message of the aid the bank had given in redeeming \$8,710,000 of the debt in the preceding July. The assistance in that transaction was

¹Jackson MSS.

really considerable and Jackson readily promised to do what was desired, and kept his promise, as his message shows.¹ At that time he had no specific grudge against the bank, although he was generally opposed to it. Lewis, leaning as usual to the institution, made more of this concession than the facts warranted and deceived the over-sanguine bank president. "I think you will find," he wrote, "the *old fellow* will do justice to the Bank."

Biddle, pleased with this success, determined to move for re-charter. He conceived a plan by which through the operations of the bank he would pay the remaining national debt by January 8, 1833, knowing well how quickly Jackson would catch at the idea of making the anniversary of the battle of New Orleans the time for achieving an object so much in his heart. The idea, suggested through the faithful Lewis, pleased the President, who asked for particulars. They were as follows: For a new charter and for the government's seven millions of stock in the bank and cash equal to one half the par value of the thirteen millions two hundred and ninety-six thousand of 3 per cent. revolutionary debt still unpaid, Biddle would give the seven million dollars certificate of indebtedness, bearing interest at 5 per cent., which the government owed for its stock and assume all of the 3 per cents. The remaining debt, a little more than thirty-seven millions, he thought might be redeemed from the surplus revenue in the time specified. It is true that about nine millions of this was not due until the years 1833-1836, but there would be enough surplus revenue to meet this, and if the government would pay the money to the bank he would also assume that. He even suggested that he would agree to give in addition a bonus of one and a half millions.

By this offer the bank seemed to be willing to assume twenty millions of debt in exchange for six millions six hundred and forty-eight thousand dollars to meet half the revolutionary

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 451.

3 per cents. and for the government's bank stock, a total of little more than thirteen millions par value. But it was not really so advantageous to the national treasury. The 3 per cents. were then worth less than par and the bank stock was worth one hundred and twenty-five and with a new charter would probably be worth one hundred and fifty. Professor Catterall justly observes that the property the government was asked to transfer was worth to the bank under the proposed conditions as much as seventeen millions, so that Biddle would be giving for the new charter, bonus included, only four and a half millions, and not the seven and a half millions which on its face the offer seemed to imply. This plan was communicated to Lewis, November 15, 1829.¹

For all this the proposition was a good one, and Jackson was impressed by it; but it did not overcome his constitutional scruples, and he said as much. Biddle went to Washington, had a conversation with the President, and carried away the conviction that he would at last overcome all objections and get what he wanted. He has left the following memorandum in his own hand which gives the distinct idea that Jackson in the interview made no definite promises but bore himself with dignity and self-restraint:

Mr. Biddle: I was very thankful to you for your plan of paying off the debt sent to Major Lewis. I thought it my duty to submit it to you.

I would have no difficulty in recommending it to Congress, but I think it right to be perfectly frank with you. I do not think that the power of Congress extends to charter a Bank ought [out] of the ten miles square.

I do not dislike your Bank any more than all banks. But ever since I read the history of the South Sea bubble I have been afraid of Banks. I have read the opinion of John Marshall who I believe was a great and pure mind — and could not agree

¹Catterall, *Second Bank*, 188-194, has well described this incident.

with him — though if he had said, that as it was necessary for the purposes of the national government there ought to be a national bank I should have been disposed to concur. But I do not think the congress has a right to create a corporation out of the ten miles square. I feel very sensibly the services rendered by the Bank at the last payment of the national debt and shall take an opportunity of declaring it publicly in my message to congress. That is my own feeling to the Bank — and Mr. Ingham's also — He and you got into a difficulty thro' the foolishness — if I may use the term of Mr. Hill.

Observing he was a little embarrassed I, [Biddle] said "Oh, that has all passed now." He said with the Parent Board and myself he had ever reason to be satisfied — that he had heard complaints and then mentioned a case at Louisville of which he promised to give me the particulars.

I said "Well I am very much gratified at this frank explanation. We shall all be proud of any kind mention in the message — for we should feel like soldiers after an action commenced by their General." "Sir," said he, "it would be only an act of justice to mention it."¹

Biddle probably did not appreciate Jackson, whom popular opinion thought easily influenced. He doubtless knew that the majority of the cabinet were for the bank, he counted strongly on Lewis, and he said that some other advisers, meaning members of the "Kitchen Cabinet" had become friendly. He could not have included among them Amos Kendall who never favored the bank. Later he was surprised at the annual message and thought Jackson had deceived him; but without more specific information than he gave it is hard to believe this of a man whose nature was admittedly frank to the point of rashness. It is easier to think that the bank president counted too much on his own manipulations. However that may be, he was in no position to complain that the question of recharter was prematurely opened.

¹Catterall, *Second Bank*, 179, 184, 192, thinks this document an unsigned letter from Jackson to Biddle. But the handwriting is Biddle's and its content is only explainable as above.

The first annual message, December 8, 1829, was expected with keen interest. Near the close of the document was the following:

The charter of the Bank of the United States expires in 1836, and its stockholders will most probably apply for a renewal of their privileges. In order to avoid the evils resulting from precipitancy in a measure involving such important principles and such deep pecuniary interests, I feel that I cannot, in justice to the parties interested, too soon present it to the deliberate consideration of the legislature and the people. Both the constitutionality and the expediency of the law creating this bank are well questioned by a large portion of our fellow-citizens, and it must be admitted by all that it has failed in the great end of establishing a uniform and sound currency.

Under these circumstances, if such an institution is deemed essential to the fiscal operations of the Government, I submit to the wisdom of the Legislature whether a national one, founded upon the credit of the Government and its revenues, might not be devised which would avoid all constitutional difficulties and at the same time secure all the advantages to the Government and country that were expected to result from the present bank.

Remonstrance came at once from the friends of the bank, and the Adams men echoed the protest. To say that the bank had not given the country a uniform and sound currency was undoubtedly an error and indicates the superficiality of his ideas of finance. He probably meant that the bank failed in the purpose for which it was established because the country had a variety of depreciated state bank-notes, but a good financier would have known that the bank measurably restrained such issues and prevented far worse conditions than existed.

The message was also criticized because it raised at this early date a question which must be settled after the end of the term for which he was elected. But on that point he stood on better

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 462.

ground. There was an educational value in an early consideration of the matter; for if the bank ought not to be rechartered the people ought to have their attention called to it soon enough to form an opinion. If financial evils should come from such a precipitation of the question, that was an evil inherent in the system by which financial interests were made dependent on political connections.

The reference to the bank pleased all who supported the school of revived state rights as well as that vast democratic mass whose political consciousness Jackson was then calling into existence, men who resented the privileges of a great monied corporation. Business interests and persons generally who did not distrust wealth found it ill advised, and the politicians who followed Clay and Adams stimulated their opposition. But Jackson did not falter; he wrote on December 19th:

I was aware the bank question would be disapproved by all the sordid and interested who prize self-interest more than the perpetuity of our liberty, and the blessings of a free republican government. . . . The confidence reposed by my country dictated to my conscience that now was the proper time, and, although I disliked to act contrary to the opinion of so great a majority of my cabinet, I could not shrink from a duty so imperious to the safety and purity of our free institutions as I considered this to be. I have brought it before the people, and I have confidence that they will do their duty.¹

And he took up at once the formulation of a plan for a bank to replace the one then in existence. He had talked over his idea with the facile Hamilton; and he now asked him to work out the details in two plans, one for a bank subordinate to the treasury department, which would receive deposits, transfer the public money, and establish a sound and uniform currency; "the other of a mixed character which may fulfil all the purposes

¹Hamilton, *Reminiscences*, 151.

of a bank, and be free from the infringement of state rights and our Constitution." Two weeks earlier Hamilton was informed in confidence that in a certain contingency he would become secretary of state, and he applied himself to the task now required with such industry that on January 4, 1830, he sent the President a scheme for the creation of five "offices of deposit" to receive, collect and disburse the national funds.¹ But nothing came of Jackson's efforts at that time. Congress was soon considering his suggestions with such an unfavorable attitude as to preclude further development of his ideas.

But they were continually in his mind, and in a letter of July 17th, he stated them in a way which, though not very explicit, leaves no doubt of the spring of his aversion to the institution then existing. He wrote:

I have not time to go into the Bank question at present, can only observe, that my own opinion is, that it should be merely a *National Bank of Deposit*, with power in time of war to issue its bills bearing a moderate rate of interest, and payable at the close of the war, which being guaranteed by the national faith pledged, and based upon our revenue would be sought after by the monied capitalists, and do away, in time of war, [with] the necessity of *loans*. This is all the kind of a bank that a republic should have. But if to be made a bank of discount as well as deposit, I would frame its charter upon the checks of our government, attach it to, and make a part of the revenue, and expose its situation as part thereof annually to the nation, and the property of which would then onure to the whole people, instead of a *few monied capitalists*, who are trading upon our revenue, and enjoy the benefit of it, to the exclusion of the many. The Bank of deposit, and even of discount would steer clear of the constitutional objections to the present Bank, and all the profits arising would accrue and be disposable as other revenue for the benefit of the nation.²

¹Hamilton *Reminiscences*, 151 (2).

²Jackson to ———. July 17, 1830, Jackson Mss.

Jackson preserved a letter from Alfred Balch, a Nashville supporter, which voices the ordinary complaints against the bank, complaints which sunk deeply into Jackson's mind. Balch writes:

Old Mr. Crutcher told me a few days ago, that he had a check on the Bank of the U. States last week, drawn by a public officer, payable at sight at Phila. He went to the office here and wished cash for it. They charged him one per cent. for advancing the money. Notes payable at the office at Boston are thrown in here. If you wish to receive silver for them you must pay two and one-half per cent. Instead of loaning money here at 6 per ct., they will buy a bill on the office at New Orleans, charge you $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. premium and 6 per ct., all payable in advance and the office at New Orleans will charge you $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for accepting it there. So that the object of this immense institution is to make money, to secure a large dividend for the benefit of the great stock-holders on the other side of the Atlantic. As to the effects of the office here, they must in the end prove in the last degree calamitous. Those who borrow are encouraged in their extravagant modes of dressing and living which are far greater than their means will justify. Many are building little palaces, furnishing them in very expensive style, and the children of many are dressed as though they were the sons and daughters of princes. What may remain of the wrecks produced by these splendid follies will after a few years be seized on by this Mammoth Bank.¹

The writer was a man of note in Tennessee, a politician of influence, and a supporter of Van Buren. His opinion was not worse than that of the average man in the country; and it was this average opinion, which resented the bank as a great and devouring monopoly, that gave the ultimate stroke to what Jackson repeatedly called "the hydra of corruption."

That part of the message which related to the bank was referred

¹Balch to Jackson, January 7, 1830, Jackson Mss.

in the senate to the committee on finance and in the house to the committee of ways and means. Biddle welcomed this as an opportunity to get endorsement for the bank, since he knew that each house was now in its favor. He wrote the report of the former committee almost verbatim¹ and furnished the facts on which the latter rested. When these reports were accepted in the two houses he scattered them broadcast throughout the country. He said he was anxious lest this activity and the opposition of congress should irritate the president.² That he could have the least doubt on the point shows that he knew not Jackson.

The bank situation at this time derived a peculiar significance from its connection with Calhoun, who in May of this year came to a definite, but not yet announced breach with the President. McDuffie, Calhoun's representative in the house, was chairman of the ways and means committee, whose report not only supported the bank of the United States, but contemptuously declared that the proposed substitute was fraught with danger. It would increase the patronage, become an engine of tyranny, and fail to give needed banking facilities. Perhaps the Calhoun wing of the party thought it time to show that they were not identified with Western ideals. Van Buren also played his part. He professed strict state rights theories, which showed Jackson that his heart was right, while to his friends he said—with an eye on the financial influence of New York—that with Madison he thought that doubts of the power of congress to create the bank were settled by the decisions of the supreme court and by the acquiescence of the people.³ Every little helped, and the upshot was that the McDuffie report awakened Jackson's wrath. He called on J. A. Hamilton to write a crushing reply and got willing compliance, but with

¹Catterall, *Second Bank*, 198, note 3.

²Catterall, *Second Bank*, 199, note 5.

³Hamilton, *Reminiscences*, 150.

admirable calmness he returned the paper with the request that Calhoun's name be stricken from it.

"From a correspondence lately between him and myself," he continued, "in which I was obliged to use the language of Cæsar, '*Et tu, Brute?*' it might be thought to arise from personal feeling, and arouse the sympathy of the people in his favor. You know an experienced general always keeps a strong reserve, and hereafter it may become necessary to pass in review the rise and progress of this hydra of corruption, when it will be proper to expose its founders and supporters by name. Then, and then only, can his name be brought with advantage and propriety before the nation. I return it for this correction, which, when made, and two following numbers forwarded with it, I will have them published in the *Telegraph*. This is the paper, for more reasons than one."¹

It was good politics to make Green publish the piece; for it would tend to weaken McDuffie as the exponent of the Calhoun faction, and Jackson did not feel strong enough in the party to try to go alone. But he foresaw the open breach and was determined to have a new editor.²

To sum up, he opposed a bank in the hands of individual capitalists, Eastern men and foreigners, who might and probably did have a large political influence through a series of powerful lobbies as well as through participation in nominations if not in actual elections. He believed that a bank attached to the treasury would give all necessary banking services. His plan would build up a patronage quite as dangerous as the influence of the present institution, but he was honestly unconscious of danger from that source. He knew that Biddle was striving for re-charter, that he circulated thousands of documents favorable to the bank, that he employed Gallatin and others to write for

¹ Hamilton. *Reminiscences*, 168.

² Jackson to Lewis, June 26, 1830, Mss. New York Public Library.

it, that Webster was a member of the central board of directors, and that all its influence would be brought to bear on members of congress to get a new charter. At this time the Calhoun controversy, the Eaton affair, and the cabinet dissensions embarrassed the party, and it took a great deal of courage to drive the quarrel with the bank into the midst of this complex political situation. But he did not hesitate. No other man then in public life, says Van Buren, equaled him in confidence that the people would support one who labored with sincerity for their interests.¹

During the autumn of 1830 Biddle induced many bank supporters to urge Jackson to change his views. They found him calm but reticent. They got the impression, and it became a certainty with Biddle himself, that while the President preferred his own bank plan he would not veto a new charter if congress took the responsibility of passing it. The moment seemed propitious, and the bank's president determined to ask for a charter at the coming session. His hopes were transitory; for the second message, December 6, 1830, repeated the declarations of the first and amplified the President's scheme for a bank.

Some autograph notes prepared in anticipation of this occasion indicate that the plan incorporated in the message was essentially Jackson's. They have this other advantage that they show what he at that time really thought of the existing bank. The corporation, he said, had two disadvantages. (1) It was unconstitutional because congress had no power to create a corporation, because it withdrew capital from the control of the state, because it bought real estate without the consent of a state, which the federal government itself could not do; and (2) It was dangerous to liberty because through its officers, loans, and participation in politics it could build up or pull down parties or men, because it created a monopoly of the money power, because much of the

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, VI., 36, Van Buren Mss.

stock was owned by foreigners, because it would always support him who supported it, and because it weakened the state and strengthened the general government. Two things about these reasons are notable: nothing was said about the failure of the bank to give a good currency, and the institution is not pronounced unsafe. On the contrary, much is said for the bank. "This Bank," says the memorandum, "renders important services to the Government and country. It cheapens and facilitates all the fiscal operations of the Government. It tends in some degree to equalize domestic exchange, and produce a sound and uniform currency." It was not to be destroyed but a substitute provided "which shall yield all its benefits, and be obnoxious to none of its objections." There is every reason to believe that at this time Jackson's attitude toward the institution was reasonable and well meaning.

The bank party were discouraged. Their newspapers found the proposed substitute unworthy of serious notice. But the situation was not alarming. Lewis gave Biddle private assurances of peace,¹ and he well might do so; for as yet the chief members of the administration circle were for the bank. The policy of opposition was distinctly Jackson's, and he was not disposed to push his ideas for the present. No bill to re-charter was introduced in the winter of 1830-'31, congress adjourned in March, the cabinet was reorganized in May and June, and harmony reigned in the party. Most of the new cabinet were friendly to the bank, but none would oppose the President openly on what was now a fixed policy with him. McLane, secretary of the treasury, an old federalist, favored the bank, but the President liked him personally and each was disposed to overlook the conviction of the other on this crucial point. Livingston was for temporizing, but Taney, who became attorney-general was a resolute state rights man and gave a vigorous mind with

¹Catterall, *Second Bank*, 204, note 1.

a vast capacity for work to the destruction of the bank, which he disliked as much as Kendall or Jackson, himself. Cambreleng pronounced him "the only efficient man of sound principles in the Cabinet."¹ Outside of it Blair gave powerful aid with the *Globe* and Kendall planned unceasingly. Van Buren, whose hand in the conflict was usually conceded, was sent to England, but his New York supporters followed Jackson faithfully.

Thus throughout the first congress under Jackson the bank controversy was precipitated, but neither side ventured to carry it to the final stage. Each made a definite appeal to public opinion, Jackson by his statements that the objects for which the institution was founded were not accomplished, that it was, in fact, a menace to good government, and by his proposition that its functions be given to a bank in the profits of which the capitalists of the country should not share. The bank was now put on the defensive, although the time was coming when it must assume the initiative and ask for its object or pass out of existence. Newspaper comment on each side was acrimonious and the people were taking sides with more passion than judgment. The twenty-second congress, which met December 5, 1831, saw the conflict fought to its legislative close.

¹Cambreleng to Van Buren, February 5, 1832, Van Buren Mss; Jackson to Blair, January 17, 1843, Jackson Mss.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE ATTEMPT TO RE-CHARTER THE BANK

AS THE beginning of the new congress approached Biddle became alive to the situation. He was already in communication with McLane and Livingston, both of whom favored a new charter. The former went to Philadelphia in October and pledged the administration to a more pacific policy. He said that since Jackson knew he could not get his own bank scheme adopted he would accept the old charter with certain modifications. It was agreed that McLane, as secretary of the treasury, should advocate re-charter in his own report and that the President in the message should say that having brought the matter before congress he would leave it with them. Both features of the agreement were kept, McLane's literally but Jackson's with a modification which gave uneasiness to the bank. He said in the message, December 6, 1831, that he still held "the opinions heretofore expressed in relation to the Bank as at present organized," but that he would "leave it for the present to the investigation of an enlightened people and their representatives."¹ Reasserting his previous opinions and speaking about the approval of the people were matters not considered in the secret conference in Philadelphia.

It seems likely that McLane misjudged Jackson. Knowing his inexperience and mistaking the import of his cordiality in personal relations, he based his assurances not merely on what Jackson said but on what he thought he could induce him to say. We know not what Jackson told him, since no first hand

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 558.

evidence survives on the point. All our information comes from Biddle, who had it from McLane and others equally biased toward the bank. They were all striving to influence the President, especially the secretary of the treasury, who would gain in public esteem if he could take the party safely through this perplexing situation. Jackson probably was carried further by this assault than he realized. He liked McLane's frank way of dealing with him and forgave him the contrary report on the bank. "It is an honest difference of opinion," he said, "and in his report he acts fairly by leaving me free and uncommitted. This I will be on this subject."¹

The growing ascendancy of McLane dismayed the anti-bank men. They began to say Jackson had surrendered, and they never forgave the secretary for what they considered a treacherous and selfish policy.² When the President knew of their suspicions he denied the imputation of shifting, saying: "Mr. McLane and myself understand each other, and have not the slightest disagreement about the principles, which will be a *sine qua non* in my assent to a bill rechartering the bank."³

The situation favored wire-pulling. A group of New York democrats sought to advance their own interests by getting a charter for a bank to replace the existing institution, but the scheme was weak politically and financially and did not go far. The bank democrats sought to reconcile the President's oft-mentioned bank plan with something the present bank would accept as a modification of their charter. They used all their power of persuasion on him, and he probably gave up something for the sake of the party; but he talked little and we cannot say what he relinquished. Divided as the party was, it was evident

¹Jackson to Van Buren, December 6, 1831, W. Lowrie to *ibid*, February 27, 1832; Van Ness to *ibid* March 9, 1832; Van Buren Mss.

²J. A. Hamilton to Van Buren, December 7, 1831, Van Buren Mss.

³Jackson to Hamilton, December 12, 1831, *Reminiscences*, 234.

that the bank question ought to be deferred until after the coming election: on this point all democrats were agreed.

The anti-bank men were alarmed at these developments. J. A. Hamilton spoke in dismay of making a flying trip to London to talk over the matter with Van Buren. Cambreleng wrote, January 4, 1832, that Jackson stood entirely alone, and that McLane, Livingston, Cass, Lewis, Campbell, were for the bank. "Woodbury," he said, "keeps snug and plays out of all the corners of his eyes. Taney, strange as it may seem, is the best Democrat among us. He is with Kendall, Hill, Blair, etc. Barry, I presume, I should have put with the President, or else in the last list. McLane has burnished all his satellites with the Bank gold and silver. Somehow or other they all begin to think the Bank must be re-chartered." Neither Hamilton nor Cambreleng would say that Jackson had entirely surrendered.¹

John Randolph, also, wrote to remonstrate. On his opposition to "the Chestnut Street Monster," he said, rested his support of the administration; for he considered this the overshadowing issue. If Jackson disappointed him in this respect he would still support him against Clay, Webster, Calhoun, and Adams — "the best of the set" — but his vote would be delivered with forceps.² Jackson replied at once. Reports that he was for the bank were not true, he said: he believed it unconstitutional and "on the score of mere expediency dangerous to liberty, and therefore, worthy of the denunciation which it has received from the disciples of the old Republican school." He believed it had failed to serve the country as was expected and would never give it his official sanction; and as to McLane's report, that was a matter of individual opinion over which he, Jackson, had no control. When Randolph got this letter he was very ill but managed to send a reply worthy of his wit. "I see," he wrote,

¹Hamilton to Van Buren, December 23, 1831; Cambreleng to Van Buren, January 4, 1832; Van Buren Mss.

²Randolph to Jackson, December 19, 1831, Jackson Mss.

"that with your arch enemy the grand Nullifier working in the Senate with the Coalition and his *clientèle* dependent upholding the Bank in the other House and all working against you that you have Sysiphean labor to perform. I wish I were able to help you roll up the stone, but I cannot. I am finished." On this letter Jackson endorsed as directions for his secretary; "Regret his indisposition and never fear the triumph of the U. S. Bank while I am here."¹

Nor was McLane himself sure of his ground with the President; he told the bank it ought to be satisfied with the message, that it showed Jackson was wavering, and that if time were given him, he would become convinced of his error. Both McLane and Lewis urged that in the meantime the President ought not to be pressed. Every party consideration demanded that he veto a charter introduced in the coming session of congress but they put their advice on other grounds. He would, they thought, take a charter now as a challenge and veto it, even if he thought it would mean defeat in the next election.²

Clay's followers, the national republicans, were dismayed at the apparent agreement between the President and the bank. They considered the bank controversy their chief asset; and Clay was in no mood to let McLane's clever manipulation withdraw it from their hands. In their national nominating convention in December, 1831, they championed the bank, arraigned Jackson for his hostility to it, and asked the people not "to destroy one of their most valuable establishments, to gratify the caprice of a chief magistrate, who reasons and advises upon a subject, with the details of which he is evidently unacquainted, in direct contradiction to the opinion of his own official counsellors. . . . He is fully and three times over pledged to the people to negative any bill that may be passed for re-chartering

¹Jackson to Randolph, December 22, 1831; Randolph to Jackson, January 3, 1831, 1832; Jackson Mss.

²Catterall, *Second Bank*, 218, 219, notes 1, 2 and 4.

the bank, and there is little doubt that the additional influence which he would acquire by reelection, would be employed to carry through Congress the extraordinary substitute which he has repeatedly proposed."¹

In congress the leading national republicans urged an aggressive policy. They believed a veto would leave them in good fighting shape in the coming campaign, and even if Jackson were reelected they expected such a majority in the two houses that the charter could be carried over a veto. Let the bank but act boldly, they said, and the world should see.

For a brief time Biddle was courted by two parties, the supporters of Clay and the democratic faction which followed McLane. He hesitated and considered, seeking to get the best results for the institution over which he presided. To proceed now meant a veto: everybody told him that. Should he take McLane at his word, keep the bank out of the coming campaign, and trust Jackson not to veto it afterward? What assurance had he from Jackson himself that he could rely on democratic friendship? Was the party not afraid of the election and merely seeking for time? For if the bank did not ask for a charter now it must do so in Jackson's next term. It could not escape Jackson's veto, if he were determined to give it. Thus Biddle pondered, weighing the arguments on each side. He himself was a national republican. His friend, John Sergeant, who was long a trusted standing counsel for the bank, was candidate for vice-president on that ticket. Webster, another retained counsel and a member of the central directorate, was a leader in that party, and the whole financial connection was trained with it. It was the side to which he would eventually turn if necessary, and in the absence of definite assurances from Jackson himself it was probably considerations like these that weighed most with him.

¹Niles, *Register*, XLI., 310.

January 6th he forwarded to Dallas, democratic senator from Pennsylvania, the memorial of the bank asking for a new charter, and on the ninth it was presented in each house. In the senate it was referred to a select committee of which Dallas was chairman. In the house it was sent to the committee on ways and means, McDuffie, chairman. Four and a half months it lay untouched while each side gave itself to the task of arousing the country to the situation. Petitions were secured in large numbers, the most notable being from banks and business organizations in favor of the bank. But that which commanded most attention, after the congressional investigation,¹ was a memorial passed by the Pennsylvania legislature with nearly a unanimous vote in favor of the charter. It was believed that Jackson could not be reëlected without the vote of this critical state.²

McLane was discouraged by the introduction of the bank's memorial. Four days before it appeared he protested to Biddle, saying that if his advice to defer action were not taken he could do nothing further for the bank. He now became indifferent, but Livingston took up the work his colleague let fall. An intimation was given that a charter might not be vetoed, and Biddle caught at the hint. A new negotiation began in which he declared of Jackson: "Let him write the whole charter with his own hands. I am sure that we would agree to his modifications; and then let him and his friends pass it. It will then be his work. He will then disarm his adversaries." With these instructions, Ingersoll, Biddle's agent, approached Livingston, who now claimed to speak for the administration. February 22d, they drew up a plan with the following new features: (1) The government to own no stock but to appoint directors on the parent board and one on the branch directorates. (2) States to tax the bank's property as they taxed other property within their

¹See below, p. 617.

²Catterall, *Second Bank*, 221-223.

borders. (3) The bank to hold no more real estate than it needed for its own use. (4) A portion of the stock in the bank to be opened to new subscriptions. (5) The directors to name two or three of their number one of whom the President of the United States would appoint president of the bank. The first three of these features were offered as Jackson's terms, the others as coming from other persons in the administration circle. Biddle approved all but the last, which he passed over in silence.¹

Professor Catterall thinks that here Livingston spoke truly for the President, but it seems more probable that the secretary misjudged his superior. Jackson's strong assurances to Randolph show that up to this time he played a game, concealing his real purpose from the bank democrats and working for party harmony. It ought to require stronger evidence than the general assertion of the enthusiastic and impractical Livingston to show that Jackson was now willing to retreat after the combat was joined. Two months earlier he said of Livingston, "He knows nothing of mankind. He lacks in this respect that judgment which you [Van Buren] possess, in so eminent a degree, his memory is somewhat failing him."² Is it likely that Jackson would now have revealed himself to one of whom he spoke such things? Moreover, Livingston later told Parton that Jackson would have accepted a charter if the bank had been a little complaisant.³ This was in opposition to Livingston's position in 1832, when he said Jackson had agreed to accept a charter and when the bank was entirely complaisant. It adds a shade of doubt to Livingston's credibility as a witness of Jackson's intentions in February 1832.

During all this time the anti-bank democrats had been as quiet as Jackson himself. But now they came forward with a

¹Catterall, *Second Bank*, 224-228.

²Jackson to Van Buren, December 17, 1831, Jackson Mss. See also Van Buren, *Autobiography*, VI., 186, Van Buren Mss.

³*Life of Jackson*, III., 395.

play that checked all attempts at compromise. It was such a simple thing that we must think it was held back for just such an emergency. Benton has the credit of originating the idea. At his suggestion Clayton, in the house, moved an investigation into the affairs of the bank. Since that institution was applying for re-charter it could not oppose the investigation, nor could it hurry the charter through until the inquiry was made. A committee was appointed, the majority democrats, with Clayton for chairman. For six weeks it gave itself to the task, taking evidence in Washington and Philadelphia. At the end it submitted three reports, one by the majority against the bank, one by the minority in support of the bank, and an individual report by John Quincy Adams, concurred in by one other member of the committee. The last was a scathing denunciation of the whole movement against the bank.¹ The findings of the majority have not received much respect from posterity, so far as they involve principles of finance; but they displayed certain weak points in the bank's conduct which appealed strongly to the popular mind when the report became an important campaign document. They had little influence on the fight within congress, where members' minds were already made up.

The bank sent its shrewdest lobbyists to Washington to watch the situation. Horace Binney, reputed one of the best lawyers in the country, appeared soon after the memorial was introduced; Cadwalader did what he could, and Samuel Smith, of Baltimore, was nearly as energetic; but on May 20th, as the debates were about to begin, Biddle himself went to Washington and took personal charge of the fight outside of congress. Three days later the bill was taken up in the senate, June 11th it passed by a vote of twenty-eight to twenty and was sent to the house, where it passed July 3rd by one hundred and seven votes to eighty-five.

Jackson's veto came promptly, prepared probably by Taney,

¹These three reports are in *Congressional Debates*, VIII., part III., Appendix, 33-73.

who wrote many of his papers in connection with the bank affair. It attacked the bill on grounds of constitutionality and expediency. It was written with an eye to the coming campaign, and the most important features were the following:¹

The bank was a monopoly extended for fifteen years beyond its existing term for which the proposed bonus of three million dollars was not adequate payment. With re-charter the stock would undoubtedly be worth one hundred and fifty dollars a share, and instead of continuing to have the old bank "why should not the government sell out the whole stock and thus secure to the people the full market value of the privileges granted?" Moreover, other citizens than the present shareholders — who were foreigners and a few wealthy Eastern capitalists — had asked to be allowed to subscribe for a part of the stock, and their rights should not have been ignored: they would have given more than the bonus provided in this bill. But it is said that closing up the bank would make a pressure in business: this was not true in any just sense, since the time was ample for easy adjustment to new conditions, and any pressure resulting must be due solely to the deliberate action of the bank.

The charter by obliging the bank to furnish lists of stockholders made it possible for the states to tax the shares, but this became a blemish in the eyes of the President, since in the West and South, where the bank realized a large part of its profits, there were few shareholders. For example, there were none in Alabama, yet the Mobile branch made ninety-five thousand dollars of profit the preceding year, all taken out of the state, much of it for foreigners, and the state not allowed to tax it one penny.

By the new charter the notes of a branch were to be redeemed by any branch without discount when offered by a state bank. This was very well so far as the state banks were concerned,

¹For the veto see Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, II., 576.

said the veto, but why discriminate against the individual holders of branch notes?

Foreign stockholders were not to vote, and as the stock went abroad the holders of it at home would have an increasing share of power until the bank was at last controlled by a small clique of our own bankers. But if war occurred with the nation in which the foreign holders lived their position would give them a great advantage over us. The American officers of the bank would be subservient to the foreign shareholders, "and all its operations within would be in aid of the hostile fleets and armies without. Controlling our currency, receiving our public moneys, and holding thousands of our citizens in dependence, it would be more formidable and dangerous than the naval and military power of the enemy." The writer of the paper thus found no difficulty in making the foreign shareholders powerless in times of peace and predominantly powerful in times of war.

There was much like this, five pages of it at the beginning and three at the end, but in between these two parts was an argument on constitutionality which could have come from no other member of the anti-bank coterie than Taney. It was in itself a veto message and repeated some of the things which went before or came after it. It was expressed in concise, legal style, in contrast to the loose illogic of the rest of the document. It is as if it were furnished to the President as a message proper, was deemed too cold for popular reading, and was lengthened at each end by some such purveyor of balderdash as Isaac Hill or Amos Kendall.

In this interior, more argumentative, part the writer laid down the President's view of his relation to the supreme court. This tribunal, said the message, "ought not to control the co-ordinate authorities of this government. . . . Each public officer who takes an oath to support the Constitution swears that he will support it as he understands it, and not as it is under-

stood by others. . . . The opinion of the judges has no more authority over Congress than the opinion of Congress has over the judges, and on that point the President is independent of both. The authority of the supreme court must not, therefore, be permitted to control the Congress or the Executive when acting in their legislative capacities, but to have only such influence as the force of their reasoning may deserve." This statement has often been quoted without the last sentence in it. Such an omission does injustice to Jackson, so far as the sentiment can be said to be his.

The bank men received the veto message with shouts of delight. They believed it would make converts for their side and ordered thirty thousand copies printed for distribution. Biddle said of it: "It has all the fury of a chained panther, biting the bars of his cage. It is really a manifesto of anarchy."¹ This utterance shows how much the head of the bank party was carried away by the ardor of combat. The message contained neither fury nor anarchy. There was ignorance of finance in it, but it was shrewdly planned to reach a class of people whom Biddle and the important men who dealt in banking understood no more than Jackson understood the bankers. For every respectable citizen whom the message disgusted there were many average men who believed that the accumulation of great wealth in the hands of one corporation threatened liberty and to these its reasoning was satisfactory.

The veto drew party lines for the democrats, some of whom voted for re-charter with misgivings. But they must now stand for Jackson or against him. The very rejoicing of the national republicans hardened the allegiance of democrats to their own party. While many politicians nearer home sent assurances of support, James Buchanan, in St. Petersburg, sent in his submission. Till now, he said, he was for the bank, but the veto

¹Clay, *Correspondence*, 341.

converted him; he would support his leader. More interesting still is the course of Senator Dallas, whom the bank selected to lead its fight in the senate. The first evidence of Jackson's wrath filled him with dismay, and before the end of the session he was talking to his intimates about repudiating the bank. Arrived at home he fulfilled his threat. He said:

A few days satisfied me, that my friend, The Bank, was, either with or without its own consent and connivance, taking a somewhat too ostensible part in the political canvass. The institution, as an useful agent of government, is one thing — its directors or managers, or partizans, are quite another thing — both united are not worth the cause which depends on the re-election of Jackson. On the very day of my arrival, I passed by a large Town-meeting convened to denounce the Veto and uphold the bank — and the sight of it roused me into an immediate effort to procure a counteracting assemblage on the same spot, that day week. Some very kind friends strove to throw cold water upon my ardor by hinting that my votes and speeches in the Senate were recent and well remembered — that my position would be awkward, if I did not fall into the ranks of those who at least condemned the Veto, etc. I took counsel of my conscience and judgment — and being perfectly self-convinced that I might be both a true and constant friend of the Institution, and at the same time an unflinching adherent to Democracy and the re-election of Jackson, I attended the meeting — made my speech — and felt instantly relieved from what seemed to me, before, might be thought an undecided and equivocal attitude. The truth is, as you know, that altho solicitous to save the corporation by a re-charter, I never conceived it to be of the immense and essential importance described by my Senatorial neighbor on the left and rear — I was always for the sentiment which is now hoisted most high — Jackson, bank or no bank.¹

In applying for a charter and throwing himself into the hands

¹ G. M. Dallas to Bedford Brown, no date but in 1832, probably late in the summer. See *Trinity College (North Carolina) Historical Papers*, VI, 68.

of the national republicans Biddle made the bank the chief question of the presidential contest, and the stumps throughout the country rang with cries for and against until the November election was held. Jackson's two hundred and nineteen votes to Clay's forty-nine can only be considered as the nation's verdict. The President ever claimed that Biddle ought to have accepted the result as final, and that if he had done so the later evils in the situation would have been avoided. It is certain that Biddle did not think the fight ended. He hoped by some turn to wrest victory from the situation. Foreseeing the distress which must attend the closing of the bank, he hoped that it would be enough to show the American people the folly of 1832, and to induce them to reverse their verdict.

During the campaign of 1832, and in the controversy over the removal of the deposits in 1833, many charges were made against the bank. Some were true, some partly true, and some false. It seems well to deal with them here.¹

1. It was charged that directors, especially in the branches, were appointed from political motives. The charge was partly true. From the beginning directors were selected with the intention of favoring the party in power. Biddle found the system in force when he took office but disapproved of it and did something to check it. It existed when Jackson became President of the United States. Directors were usually taken from the merchant class, most of whom opposed him. From the victors came a demand for representation on the boards. Biddle was too practical to resist absolutely. He threw the Nashville branch entirely into Lewis's hands and held back only when he saw that this prince of spoilsmen was bent on getting control of all the branches in the West. The trouble here lay with the system, not with Biddle. Americans were hot partisans: there

¹These charges have been so well summed up in Professor Catterall's eleventh chapter (pages 243-284) that I have been left no choice but to follow his treatment with little addition of new facts.—The Author.

was no neutral class from whom strictly non-partisan directors could be supplied.

2. The bank was said to lobby in its own behalf. It never denied the assertion; but it declared that it used no corrupt methods, and proof to the contrary was not produced. Jackson claimed that it bribed its way in congress, but this was the vapor-ing of partisan anger. Nevertheless the wealth of the bank, its able direction, and its extended influence gave it great power through the use of what may be termed legitimate lobbying. It is a question if merely in this kind of activity it could be pronounced a harmless participant in public life.

3. There were frequent charges of using money at the polls. The charge was repeated most forcefully and with most details in regard to the Kentucky branches. It was alleged that in 1828, two hundred and fifty dollars of the bank's money were used outright in treating at the polls and in hiring hacks to take voters to the voting places. Worden Pope, connected with the Louisville branch, denied this charge. He was the man accused in it and said that the "new court" party had spent money in politics and he merely "beat them with their own dirty stick," but that all the money he used was his own and he spent it of his own volition.¹ Reliable evidence on such a point is difficult to obtain, but when the officers individually avowed the practice, the public was naturally sensitive about the action of the bank.

4. Biddle was accused of giving special favors to congressmen, such as lending money on insufficient security, transferring money for them without charge, and paying their salaries in drafts on distant cities without cost, favors which he did not extend to private persons. Facts to prove these assertions were adduced, although the occurrences were not so common as the professed terror of the democrats implied. He also

¹Jackson to Ingham, December 20, 1830; R. Desha to Jackson, December 5, 1828; W. Pope to Jackson, June 19, 1831; Jackson Mss.

advanced the money for congressmen's salaries in anticipation of the passage of the general appropriations bill and without interest. By loss of such interest and of exchange on drafts the bank gave to members of congress several thousand dollars a year. Biddle's philosophy on matters like these is expressed in the following words:

The existence of this institution must depend on the opinion entertained of it by those who will before long be asked to continue its Charter and altho' I would sacrifice nothing of right or of duty to please them or to please anybody, still if a proper occasion presents itself of rendering service to the interior proving the usefulness of the Bank, so as to convert enemies into friends, we owe it to ourselves and to the stockholders not to omit that occasion.¹

5. Another charge was subsidizing the press. It was persistently made and widely believed. Biddle, it was thought, lent money readily to newspapers and made them his tools, and only those were considered honest which did not wear his collar. Yet his avowed policy was otherwise. When Webster advised him to help Gales and Seaton, publishers of the *Intelligencer*, on the ground that their influence was useful, he refused pointedly, saying that it would be a just reproach to the bank to undertake to lend its funds under such conditions. This he said in 1828, when the question of re-charter was not up; but three or four years later he made large loans to editors, some of them the most important defenders of the bank in the profession, and others opposed to it. The *Intelligencer* now got over forty-four thousand dollars and Duff Green of the *Telegraph*, since Calhoun's defection a friend of the bank, got twenty thousand. Biddle declared that all these loans were made as mere business propositions, and it was pertinently asked if editors alone should be denied accommodation — as pertinently as Jackson asked if

¹Biddle to Webster, December 2, 1828, quoted by Catterall, *Second Bank*, 257.

editors alone should be denied appointments to office. The matter is perplexing; for we cannot know how much a loan to a supporter was an inducement to defend the bank, or how much one to an opponent was given because a refusal would be heralded as an act of oppression. It was only one of the unfortunate complications arising from the connection of the bank with politics.

But in one loan Biddle was not clear of wrong-doing. The *Courier and Enquirer*, of New York, was one of the most important papers in the country. Its editors were J. Watson Webb, James Gordon Bennett and Major M. M. Noah. Webb was for Adams, but his associates were for Jackson and fixed the policy of the paper. In 1831 they formed a scheme against the bank, as Bennett described it. Through the aid of Silas E. Burrows, a merchant with a shifty political connection, they got fifteen thousand dollars from Biddle, in Philadelphia, giving in exchange Noah's note endorsed by Webb for eighteen months. The note was payable to Burrows, who transferred it to Biddle and from him personally received the money, and it was only some months later that the President entered it on the books of the parent bank; but as soon as it was given the journal changed its policy and began to advocate re-charter. In February, 1832, when an investigation of the bank was moved in the house of representatives, Burrows appeared in Philadelphia, borrowed fifteen thousand dollars of the bank, and with it took up the tell-tale note, thus transferring the debt from the editors to himself. In the same year Noah left the paper and it came out for Clay. In August Webb borrowed twenty thousand and in December fifteen thousand more. With accrued interest his debt amounted to a little less than fifty-three thousand dollars. A part of it, eighteen thousand six hundred dollars, was protested in 1833, and two years later he offered to settle it at ten cents on the dollar. Webb claimed that when the debt was made the

paper was ample security for its repayment. But the devious manner in which the first loan was secured, the fact that the time allowed amounted to five years — which was against the rule of short loans for ordinary patrons — and the efforts to conceal it from the investigating committee show that it was not an ordinary business transaction.

6. The liberal circulation of speeches, pamphlets, and magazine articles was considered an evil by Biddle's enemies. His own point of view was irreproachable. The first bank, he thought, was destroyed in 1811 because the people did not understand its services. "I saw the manner in which the small demagogues of that day deceived the community," he said — "and I mean to try to prevent the small demagogues of this day repeating the same delusions."¹ He threw himself into the task of enlightenment with his usual energy, and he soon had the appearance of trying to carry the popular mind by storm. To the democrats it seemed that he identified himself with the propaganda of their enemies. They complained that a semi-public institution should use its money against them. When the investigations showed that in 1831 the directors in Philadelphia gave the bank's president power to spend money for necessary purposes without vouchers and without reporting the purpose of expenditure, the democrats made bitter complaint. The authority was excessive: it witnessed the confidence of the directors in Biddle but it ought not to have been granted.

7. Biddle's power was really autocratic, and it was alleged that he used it improperly. By the rules he was a member of each committee of the directors, and by the rules of 1833 he named every committee but one. The most important committees in the transaction of business were those on discounts, which met twice a week, and on exchange, which met daily. His strong personality dominated each group, as, indeed it dominated

¹Biddle to Gales, March 2, 1832; quoted by Catterall, *Second Bank*, 266, note 1.

the board and even the shareholders. At meetings of the latter he usually held individually or jointly with others a majority of the proxies, and from the time he showed himself successful in the management of the institution his word was decisive in annual meetings. He was of the type frequent enough in the financial world, a strong willed man who takes the initiative and whose assumption of authority is approved on account of his success.

8. The charge which attracted most attention was in connection with the redemption of the 3 per cents., the facts of which were as follows: In March, 1832, the government notified the bank that in July it would pay half of the thirteen millions of this debt still outstanding. The moment was inopportune for Biddle: the government had recently paid a large amount of its debt for which the bank furnished the money out of the deposits, and it was not able to furnish six and a half millions more in specie on such short notice. But he himself was to blame. He knew the policy of Jackson was to pay the debt as fast as possible, and he could well have assumed that all the surplus which was accumulating in the treasury would be used for that purpose. Instead of reserving it in his vaults, he had incautiously lent it to the investing public, and it could not quickly be called in. Lending had been too liberal in the past year, and six months earlier he gave orders to lend no more unless it was necessary to support the vital business of the country. Time and again he repeated this warning, but the branches were lax, or the impetus of speculation was irresistible, and discounts went on increasing at the rate of ten millions in six months.¹

The only other thing was to postpone the payment of the debt. Biddle appealed to the government with that in view and was given an extension of three months. Within this addi-

¹Catterall, *Second Bank*, 146.

tional time the bank could not hope to withdraw the necessary money from the business of the country, especially as it soon got notice that on January 1, 1833, the government would pay the other half of the 3 per cents. Then Biddle conceived, with the aid of Cadwalader, the plan of postponing a large part of the installment by a deal with its holders. Cadwalader was sent to London to offer the foreign bondholders the obligations of the bank at one year's time with interest at 3 per cent. for these bonds to the amount of five millions. Bonds thus secured were to be turned over to the government, which would relieve itself from all responsibility by cancelling them. Thus the bank would take the place of the government for this much of the debt, which it would be able to extend one year.

Some of the foreigners gave approval to the scheme, but anticipating that some would be slow to accept it, Cadwalader arranged that the Barings, of London, should buy for the bank the rest of the required amount and withhold the certificates from the government. Now the charter of 1816 forbade the Bank of the United States to buy government stock. The scheme as arranged by Biddle was no violation of this law, but Cadwalader's modification of it was quite another thing. Moreover, it involved delay in the payment of the debt, which would certainly give offense in Washington. Cadwalader seems to have desired to keep the affair secret, but it was known at once in London and soon after in New York. It was reported to Biddle in two letters, the first informally and a few days later in the written agreement with the Barings. The latter was received in Philadelphia, October 12th, after its substance was published in New York. The president of the bank at once repudiated it; but his enemies said he did not repudiate the informal agreement and only rejected the formal one because he found the matter had become public.

The affair caused much comment. Cadwalader took all the

blame on his own head, and the bank managed to get the money for the 3 per cents. No one could justify the purchase of bonds in violation of the charter; but Biddle did not think the attempt to interfere with the government's plan to pay the debt unjustifiable. "Supposing that the certificates are delayed for a few months," he said, "what harm does that do to anybody? The interest has stopped — the money remains in the Treasury; so that instead of depriving the Government of the use of its funds, directly the reverse is true, for the Government retains the funds and pays no interest."

The various charges against Biddle were greatly exaggerated by his enemies. He was painted as drunk with the power which money gives, and the denunciation was so extravagant that he benefited by the reaction. But he is not to go scot free. He did not buy votes to control elections, but he appointed partisan directors when he thought it necessary; he did not really subsidize the press, but he was unquestionably entangled with Noah and Webb in an unjustifiable manner: he did not bribe legislators, but he employed a strong lobby, gave favors to members of congress, and by circulating their speeches identified himself with party propaganda: he did not improperly lend the bank's money to friends, but he took the authority into his own hands and against its own rules until he had the power to do so: he did not authorize the purchase of the 3 per cents., but he showed himself defiant of the will of government in trying to postpone payment in order to get out of a situation into which his own carelessness had brought him.

We ought not to forget that Biddle's difficulties were great. The nation was not wise enough to exercise political oversight over so large a machine as the bank. It had a feeling that a corporation as powerful as this was dangerous to liberty, and it would not be shown otherwise. Biddle's well-meant efforts to enlighten the people were thought to be attempts to hide his

own errors. Jackson frequently declared for "a complete divorce of the government from all banks": if there is no other reason for this, it would be enough that the separation he established has prevented the recurrence of the painful scenes and controversies which were precipitated by an enraged people about the Bank of the United States in the days of its destruction.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE BANK OF THE UNITED STATES—THE DEPOSITS REMOVED

THE presidential election was now over, and the veto was sustained. Many people hoped that the question would be dropped and the bank allowed to die peacefully when the charter expired, but not Jackson. He believed that the bank by calling in its loans could distress the people until they demanded re-charter. He believed, also, that congressmen were not proof against the wiles of the bank and that a democratic majority might, in the face of strong business pressure and by means of bribes, be induced to pass a charter over his veto. He decided to remove the deposits at once, and thus to cripple the bank's fighting power, to settle the question before the election of 1836, and to avoid jeopardizing the public deposits at the time when the last fight for re-charter must come up.

Van Buren, who was opposed to the bank on constitutional grounds, wished to see the question settled before the next election. He suggested that congress be asked to establish a bank such as Jackson would approve in the District of Columbia, with branches only by the consent of the states concerned.¹ It was believed that congress could not be induced to take this step, and Van Buren then supported removal. But he feared its influence on his following in the North, and by common consent he was allowed to remain as much as possible in the background in the contest about to begin.

Nothing was to be expected from the congress which in the recent session passed the charter. If a blow was struck it must

¹ Van Buren to Jackson, November 18, 1832, Van Buren MSS.

be by the executive itself; and the long vacation beginning March 4, 1833, afforded the opportunity for such action. Up to that time nullification and the tariff compromise occupied the attention of the politicians. Everybody, Jackson included, was willing to let the bank question lie till those matters were disposed of; but their program was made out and only awaited the adjournment of congress to be put into force. This was in spite of the fact that in the preceding December, Henry Toland, appointed by Secretary McLane to investigate the condition of the bank, reported that the institution was perfectly sound, and in spite of the plainer fact that the house of representatives on March 2nd by a large majority declared that the deposits were safe in its custody.

The anti-bank democrats were prepared to ignore Toland and congress, but they could not ignore the secretary of the treasury, since he alone could give the order for removal. McLane was so strong a man that he could not easily be dismissed, and some other way must be found to dispose of him. It was discovered that Rives desired to return from Paris and that Livingston wished to have his place. It was accordingly arranged to make the transfer and to give McLane the secretaryship of state which Livingston would relinquish. For the vacant treasury a New York man was first thought of, probably because the Van Buren men could be counted on; but the idea was rejected, and a Pennsylvanian was taken. William J. Duane was the man, suggested, it seems, by McLane.¹ He was the son of the former republican editor, ancient enemy of Gallatin, Dallas, and the whole conservative republican faction. The old man was the leader of the masses, whose support was essential to carry the state against the bank, and it seemed a good thing to have the son deal the blow which was now meditated.

Duane was not an able man. Henry Lee, when he turned

¹Jackson to Van Buren, September 15, 1832, Van Buren, *Autobiography*, V., 180-195, Van Buren MSS.

against Jackson, described him as "that other Darling whom you fished up from the desk of a dead miser, and the bottom of the Philadelphia Bar, to put in the seat which was once filled by Alexander Hamilton."¹ The offer was made by McLane in behalf of the President, and after hesitating for two months Duane accepted January 30, 1833. It was not the plan to change the cabinet until after the tariff muddle was cleared up, and so it was not until June 1st that the new secretary took his place.

Jackson was now in constant consultation with Kendall, Blair and Taney, the most active enemies of the bank. To accomplish their purpose would deprive the government of a safe place of deposit and lessen the volume of sound currency in the country. To meet the objections on these accounts they urged that state banks of undoubted soundness could be got to keep the deposits, and as for the currency, the country would be better off if only hard money was used.

But they were more immediately concerned with the political phase of the question. As a manifesto on this side Amos Kendall prepared a letter to the secretary of the treasury giving reasons for removal. He mentioned the insecurity of the funds, but dwelt on the political aspects of the matter. The bank, he said, was as much of an enemy as it could be and removing the deposits would not increase its hostility. On the other hand, the state banks, now intimidated by the great corporation, would become friends of the government as soon as they knew the public money was taken away from that corporation. Removal would please the South and West and have the support of the banks of New York, always jealous of Philadelphia's preëminence in financial affairs. Pennsylvania, he admitted, would be dissatisfied, but New England cared little for the bank and could be ignored. Re-charter, thought Kendall, was likely if nothing was done. Congress was full of doubt and the bank would

¹Lee to Jackson, December 27, 1833, Jackson Mss.

corrupt enough members at the next session to have its way. But vigorous action now would commit the friends of the administration, show that the banks were unnecessary, and answer the complaint of many Jackson men that "it is useless to buffet the bank with our left hand as long as we feed it with our right."¹

Three days after his lieutenant delivered this manifesto Jackson submitted five questions to his cabinet. He asked: (1) Has anything happened since congress met last to justify a new charter? (2) is the bank reliable and faithful to its duties? (3) should there be a new bank, and if so with what privileges? (4) should re-charter be allowed with modifications? and (5) what should be done in the future with the deposits? Commenting on his own questions Jackson indicated that he was against the continuation of the deposits.

It was about this time, a little earlier or later, that he took the advice of the cabinet as to whether it would be wiser to proceed against the bank by a writ of *scire facias* or to remove the deposits. They all agreed that a writ would be unwise: it would come at last to the supreme court, and no one could doubt how Marshall would decide it.

The President soon knew the attitudes of the secretaries. Livingston and Cass were for the bank, Barry and Taney were outspoken against it, Woodbury was not clear in his reply to the questions asked, but believed that if the bank continued it ought to have new directors and stockholders on the principle that the old set had received the benefits of it long enough. McLane took two months to write a long reply to each question. He thought the bank safe, the deposits in no danger, and he opposed removal. "The winding up of [the bank's] concerns without embarrassment to the country," he said, "is under the most favorable circumstances rather to be hoped than expected.

¹Kendall to McLane, March 16, 1833, Jackson Mss.

It is not for the Government to add to the inherent difficulties of the task, but rather to aid in obviating them; *not for the sake of the bank, but rather that of the community.*" On the report Jackson endorsed, "There are some strong points in this report all ably discussed.— A. J."¹

It is hard to reconcile this outward appearance of deliberation with his inward suspicion and irritation. To intimates he spoke of a newly discovered combination between Clay and Calhoun which secured the recent tariff law in order that the revenues should be large and remain on deposit for the benefit of the bank. These utterances throw so much light on his intellectual quality that one of them is given at length:

This combination wields the U. States Bank, and with its corrupting influence they calculate to carry everything, even its re-charter by two thirds of Congress, against the veto of the executive, if they can do this they calculate with certainty to put Clay or Calhoun in the Presidency — and I have no hesitation to say, if they can re-charter the Bank, with this hydra of corruption they will rule the nation, and its charter will be perpetual, and its corrupting influence destroy the liberty of our country. When I came into the administration it was said, and believed that I had a majority of seventy-five. Since then, it is now believed it has been bought over by loans, discounts &c., &c., until at the close of last session, it was said, there was two thirds for re-chartering it. It is believed that in the last two years, that it has loaned to members of congress and subsidized presses, at least half a million of dollars, the greater part of which will be lost to the Bank, and the stockholders,— and if such corruption exists in the green tree, what will be in the dry?

Such has been the scenes of corruption in our last congress, that I loath the corruption of human nature and long for retirement, and repose on the Hermitage. But until I can strangle this hydra of corruption, the Bank, I will not shrink from my

¹McLane to Jackson, May 20, 1833, Jackson MSS.

duty, or my part. I think a system may be arranged with the State Banks, with all the purposes of deposits, and facilities of the government in its fiscal concerns, which if it can, will withdraw the corrupting influence now exercised over congress by this monied institution which will have a healthy effect upon the legislation of congress and its morals, and prevent the continued drain of our specie from the western states to the East, and to Europe to pay the dividends. I am now engaged in this investigation, and I trust that a kind superintending providence will aid my deliberations and efforts.¹

Jackson had real doubts about the disposal of the deposits if they were removed. He asked several friends if they would be safe in the state banks. Kendall urged their entire security, and other advisers wrote to the same effect. Hugh L. White, of Tennessee, approved of the state banks and suggested that all the funds be deposited in one state bank — one of those in Virginia would serve — and let this bank distribute the money among other institutions and become responsible to the government for its safety. As to the time of removal, that ought to have been when the bank failed to call in the 3 per cents., but the opportunity having passed and congress having declared the institution solvent, public opinion would not now support removal. He advised that the matter be submitted to congress at its next session.²

An appeal to congress was not the purpose of Jackson, and it was decided early in May to proceed with his plans. It was time for action, if the matter was to be accomplished before congress met in December. First, the cabinet was reorganized. Livingston went to Paris, scandalizing his friends by borrowing eighteen thousand dollars from the wicked bank before his departure. McLane took the state department, and Duane

¹Jackson to Cryer, April 7, 1833, *American Historical Magazine*, (Nashville,) IV., 239.

²White to Jackson, April 11, 1833; Thomas Ellicott to Jackson, April 6, 1833; Powhatan Ellis to Jackson, July 2, 1833, Jackson Mss.

on June 1st became secretary of the treasury. The President was now ready to proceed. He desired to set things going before June 6th, when he was to leave on a visit to New England.

Duane was not told beforehand what was expected of him, but he was stupid if he did not have a pretty clear knowledge of the situation. For three months and a half he carried on a game of fence the object of which was to defer action. Jackson at first pressed him gently, showing for once forbearance and self-control. In the beginning he merely stated what was wanted, and when Duane demurred told him to take time and report on the matter when the trip to the North was over. Meanwhile he promised to send the secretary a statement of his views.

The day he began his journey Jackson wrote Van Buren as follows:

I want relaxation from business and rest, but where can I get rest; I fear not on this earth. When I see you I have much to say to you. The Bank and change of deposits, have engrossed my mind much, is a perplexing subject, and I wish your opinion before I finally act. This is the only difficulty I see now on our way. I must meet it fearlessly, as soon as I can digest a system that will insure a solvent currency.¹

Three days later Kendall also wrote to Van Buren. Jackson, he said, was decided about the necessity of removal, but was still debating as to the time and the new method of keeping the deposits. In anticipation of this visit Kendall sent Van Buren the following outline of a plan of procedure with reasons for action: Place the deposits with two banks in New York and with one each in Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, and possibly in Norfolk, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and New Orleans, with the understanding that these banks should collectively guarantee the safety of the funds, though they should place some

¹Jackson to Van Buren, June 6, 1833, Van Buren Mss.

of the money in such other banks as they should select with the approval of the treasury. This, it will be seen, was an amplification of White's suggestion.

Kendall further suggested the gradual withdrawal of funds then in the Bank of the United States. This, he said, ought to be done "soon enough to take the last dollar out of the United States Bank and present a new machine in complete operation before the next session of Congress" and it ought to begin before September at least. The bank, which had hitherto been on the defensive, would thus yield the advantage of that position to the government; the state banks, liberated from their fears of the "great Mammoth," would become friends of the government; and these facts, with the popularity of Jackson, would carry the country.

In New York the President and vice-president went over the matter, and June 26th the former sent his decision to the secretary of the treasury. He outlined a plan for removal with the essential features of Kendall's plan and inclosed a long exposition of the whole question, evidently from the pen of Kendall. He gave little more time to his journey. Illness prostrated him in Boston, and in a very feeble condition he set out northward but not until he attended Harvard commencement, where the president and corporation conferred upon him the honorary degree of doctor of laws. The honor was lost on its recipient, who cared nothing for such a compliment, and it angered his opponents, especially John Quincy Adams, who after that referred to him as "Doctor Andrew Jackson." At Concord, N. H., the traveler became so ill that he gave up the journey and returned to Washington as quickly as possible, arriving there July 4th.

He soon invited Duane to an interview. The latter was recovering from a severe illness and arrived very weak and pale. Jackson met him warmly, took both his hands in his

own, reproved him for coming out in such an enfeebled condition, and told him to defer the interview until strength returned.¹ Duane willingly complied, and July 12th he delivered in person a long letter summarizing his reasons for not removing the deposits until the matter was referred to congress. On the fifteenth there was a conference in which the two men came no nearer together, but they preserved their good temper, Jackson protesting his admiration for the frankness of his secretary. But Duane was not really frank; for he still hesitated to say whether or not he would do what was expected of him.

Several interviews followed,² in which neither man convinced the other; but Duane was induced to appoint Kendall special agent to interview state banks and report on their availability as places of deposit. He did this reluctantly, but said that if when he considered the report he was unable to order the removal of the deposits he would retire from the administration. This was the first real satisfaction Jackson got from the secretary, and shortly afterward he went to the Rip Raps, in Hampton Roads, for a month's rest. He was accompanied by Blair, and the two had daily conferences about the political situation. Kendall meanwhile industriously visited the bankers of the cities to the northward.

It was a critical period in the conflict. Duane was fighting for time; McLane and most of the cabinet supported him; and Van Buren himself, bound to his leader by every possible interest, could not bring himself to favor immediate action. It was at best but little time that could be gained before congress met: why not let it pass? Many persons, whigs and democrats, felt that an order for removal would but make plainer the incompetence and passions of the President and in that way make surer the fight for ultimate re-charter. Would Jackson yield before

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, V., 202, Van Buren MSS.

²For the facts in the Duane controversy reliance has been had chiefly on Duane's *Narrative*, where the letters are given on both sides.

the fears of his friends or the evident glee of his opponents? The bank men were extremely busy. Biddle exerted himself to send to Jackson an avalanche of petitions in favor of the bank. They came from all kinds of business organizations and reflected the general apprehension of disaster if the centre of the banking function were struck down. McLane was also active. He was in close touch with Duane, so that some men said he was the real head of two departments. He conceived a compromise, which about the middle of August he laid before Van Buren. He proposed that Jackson should assert executive control over the deposits, order their removal on January 1, 1834, and announce it in his message to congress. He would thus avoid the imputation of ignoring congress. Kendall heard of the scheme on his travels and said he would accept it if McLane, Duane, and the bank democrats would agree to use their influence to remove the deposits when congress met; otherwise he feared a two thirds majority would order the continuation of the bank.¹

About this time Jackson appealed to Van Buren for advice. That cautious gentleman was in a difficult position. His well-known support of McLane in general caused him to be considered persistently friendly to the bank democrats, and so good a judge of events as James Gordon Bennett thought the plan to remove the deposits was hatched by Kendall to kill Van Buren along with the bank.² Appealed to directly, the vice-president sought to avoid the responsibility of a direct answer. He knew nobody, he said in reply, whose opinion on such a matter was worth so much as that of Silas Wright, whom he had sent for; and later he would write more definitely.

"This bank matter," he added, "is to be the great finale of your public life, and I feel on that account a degree of solicitude

¹Kendall to Jackson, August 11 and 14, 1833, Jackson Mss.

²Bennett to Van Buren, September 25 (2), 1833, Van Buren Mss.

about it but little less than that which is inspired by the public considerations connected with it. I hope that we shall in the end see the matter in precisely the same light; but be that as it may, inasmuch as I know no man in the purity of whose intention as it respects the public I have greater, if as great, confidence as I have in yours, and as I cannot but look upon you as incomparably the most faithful, efficient, and disinterested friend I have ever had, so I go with you against the world, whether it respects men or things.”¹

Wright duly reported that three of the leading democrats in Albany favored immediate removal, one advised waiting on congress, while he himself was for the plan suggested by McLane. Van Buren supported his friend’s recommendation. Let all arrangements be made at once, he said, and especially the selection of the state banks of deposit, three of which ought to be in New York, and it would be better to have four there; for “those engaged in them, like the rest of their Fellow Creatures are very much governed by their own interests.”²

To this Jackson replied in mild surprise that Van Buren had accepted the plan of McLane. It brought real alarm into the breast of the New Yorker, who, in company with Washington Irving, was then about to set out on a four weeks’ trip to the Dutch settlements on the North River and Long Island. He wrote hastily to explain that he and Wright were not understood, that they gave their advice thinking that January 1st began the fiscal year, but since they learned that October 1st served for that purpose they were not so decided. In fact, they only preferred New Year’s Day, but would yield to the wisdom of the President.

And then came to Van Buren a more disquieting message. Jackson, beset by doubts, wanted his best lieutenant with him and asked him to come to Washington. It was a rude interruption of the carefully planned visit to the Dutch. Van Buren

¹Van Buren to Jackson, August 19, 1833, Jackson Mss.

²Silas Wright to Van Buren, August 28th; Van Buren to Jackson, September 4, 1833; Jackson Mss.

wanted to keep himself as free as possible from the commotion at the capital. His letter declining the suggestion also contains other interesting matter:

"I shall be governed in that matter," he wrote, "altogether by your wishes. You know that the game of the opposition is to relieve the question, as far as they can, from the influence of your well-deserved popularity with the people, by attributing the removal of the Deposits to the solicitations of myself, and the monied junto in N. York, and as it is not your habit to play into the enemies hands you will not I know request me to come down unless there is some adequate inducement for my so doing. With this consideration in view, you have only to suggest the time when you wish me to come down, and I will come forthwith. . . . And always remember that I think it an honor to share any portion of responsibility in this affair.

"Allow me to say a word to you in regard to our friend McLane. He and I differ *toto coelo* about the Bank, and I regret to find that upon almost all public questions the bias of his early feelings is apt to lead us in different directions. Still I entertain the strongest attachment for him, and have been so long in the habit of interceding in his behalf that I cannot think of giving it up, as long as I believe it in my power to serve him, and his. From what passed between us at Washington, I think it possible, that he may, (if Mr. Duane resigns) think himself obliged to tender his resignation also, which if accepted would inevitably ruin him. Your friends would be obliged to give him up politically and when stript of his influence his former Federalist friends would assuredly visit their [illegible] mortifications at his success upon him in the shape of exultations at his fall. I am quite sure that if ever he tenders his resignation he will nevertheless be anxious to remain if he can do so with honor, and if you should say in reply — that you will accept his resignation if he insists upon it but that you confide in him &c., notwithstanding the difference between you upon this point, and that if he could consistently remain in the administration you would be gratified, I think he would be induced to withdraw it."¹

¹Van Buren to Jackson, September 7, 11, 14, 1833. Jackson MSS.

Jackson at this time was much influenced by a report from the government directors in Philadelphia. Before the bill to re-charter was introduced, when final action was still doubtful, Biddle was courteous to these directors, but afterward his attitude changed. In the beginning of 1833, when new committees were made up, no government director was appointed to a standing committee, although later in the year two found places on minor committees. Saner men like Webster advised against this policy, but Biddle's attitude was thorough.¹ Early in April Kendall communicated to the government directors Jackson's desire that they should report on the condition of the bank. They replied that the books were not open to directors generally and that they could do nothing unless the secretary of the treasury gave them authority to inspect individual accounts.² But April 22nd they sent a report showing that Gales and Seaton had borrowed a large sum on the security of a contract to print the *Congressional Debates*, for which the money was not yet appropriated, but which would without doubt be paid. The loan was technically irregular, but it was reasonably safe.

This report did not warrant action, but August 19th the directors, four of them now coöperating, sent another report. They at last had access to the expense account and reported a large increase in recent years, chiefly for printing pamphlets and other articles in defence of the bank. They cited a resolution of the board, March 11, 1831, authorizing Biddle to print what he chose to defend the bank, and under which many items were charged without vouchers. This, as the directors said, enabled the bank's president to use the whole press of the country to aid him in his fight, and without accountability, if he chose to go that far. As a matter of fact Biddle spent in this way without vouchers until the end of 1834, twenty-nine thousand and

¹Catterall, *Second Bank*, 309.

²Sullivan, Wager and Gilpin to Jackson, April 8, 1833, Jackson Mss.

six hundred dollars, a sum which seemed, very large to the people of the day. It made a deep impression on the President, as his paper read in the cabinet on September 18th¹ shows.

Early in September Jackson was back in Washington pressing Duane for final action; and as the secretary still held that congress should be consulted the President hesitated no longer. Before going southward he told Taney to be prepared to take the treasury department, and he now proceeded with his plans.²

While at the Rip Raps he dictated his reasons for removing the deposits and sent the paper to Taney for revision. Under his hand it became a proper state paper and not a "combattive Bulletin," as Van Buren pronounced the first draft.³ September 17th the President took the opinion of the cabinet; it was as in the preceding March, except that Woodbury came over definitely to the President. Next day they were summoned to hear the statement of his reasons for removal. It became known as "The Paper read to the Cabinet on the Eighteenth of September" and contained the assertion that the deposits ought to be removed on October 1st. Duane must now determine what he would do, since Jackson's position amounted to an order. He took a night to consider and announced that he would not order the transfer or resign. He preferred dismissal, thinking he would stand better with the country and thought himself justified in ignoring his promise to resign. Through five days Jackson sought to change the decision of the secretary, displaying at the same time the greatest personal consideration for his feelings. Nothing shook Duane's decision, and September 23rd he received a formal note of dismissal, the draft of which exists in Taney's handwrit-

¹The reports of the directors, April 22nd and August 19th, are in *Congressional Debates*, Volume X., part 4. pages 69-74.

²Taney to Jackson, August 5, 1833, Jackson Mss.

³Van Buren, *Autobiography*, V., 216.

ing.¹ On the same day the attorney-general was authorized to take charge of the treasury.

Administration friends were now concerned lest McLane and Cass should feel compelled to resign also. They dreaded another explosion in the cabinet, and when they were discussing Taney's copy of the paper read to the cabinet they suggested as much to Jackson, who said he cared not; they could do no mischief; but that he was willing to assume the responsibility, and he added a clause to that effect to the paper before him. This, says Blair, is the origin of the oft-mentioned responsibility clause. When Taney read it later he was puzzled to know how it got in and, when Blair told of its origin, he said: "This has saved Cass and McLane; but for it they would have gone out and been ruined. As it is, they will remain and do us much mischief."

When McLane and Cass consulted Jackson on the 24th he said they ought to be satisfied with his assumption of responsibility unless they wished to go into opposition. They gave no definite answer for some days and in the meantime he cast about for their successors. He desired, as he said, men who did not think they had "a right to transact the business of the departments adversely to what the Executive believes to be the good of the country. . . . I hope for the best; but let what will come, the sun will continue to rise in the East and set in the West, and I trust in a kind Providence to guide and direct me and in a virtuous people's support."²

Taney's apprehensions were groundless. September 26th he ordered that government funds henceforth be deposited in specified state banks, and immediately came such an outpouring of wrath that democrats generally, bank and anti-bank men, were driven into solid formation. McLane and Cass offered their resignations and Jackson, in the words suggested by Van

¹Jackson Mss.

²Van Buren, *Autobiography*, VI., 3, Van Buren Mss.

³Jackson to Van Buren, September 24, 1833, Mss. Library of Congress.

Buren, refused to accept them. Benjamin F. Butler, intimate friend and law partner of the vice-president, according to a plan previously formed by that far-seeing adviser, was given the vacant attorney-generalship.¹

The meeting of congress, December 2nd, saw the beginning of an angry struggle. The message pronounced the bank "a permanent electioneering engine" which sought "to control public opinion through the distress of some and the fears of others." Biddle, it said, was curtailing discounts as the public funds were withdrawn, and this was done in order to force restoration of the deposits and ultimate re-charter. The message acknowledged that the President in regard to the bank did not agree with the recent session of congress, for whose opinions generally it protested respect; and it left the issue to the judgment of the members of congress fresh from the people. The style of the message was like that of Taney.

The secretary of the treasury reported at length his reasons for removing the deposits. He was the ablest man in the anti-bank faction, and his report is in pleasing contrast with the loose reiterations of suspicions and assumptions which came so plentifully from his colleagues. He clearly ignored Jackson's contention that the deposits were not safe in the bank but justified removal on grounds of expediency. By the sixteenth section of the charter he had full discretion to act as he saw fit. He must report his reasons to congress, but that body was not given the right to pass on them. The power to order restoration with the consent of the President was, however, implied in the general control of congress over the public funds.

The whigs and the bank, now thoroughly united, struck back at Jackson as they could. They believed public opinion was outraged by removing the deposits and felt warranted in

¹Van Buren to Jackson, September 14, 1833, Jackson Mss. See also above, II., and Parton, *Life of Jackson*, III., 501-503.

adopting a policy of minor restrictions which were, in fact, but expressions of their anger. By a vote of twenty-five to twenty they refused to confirm the renomination of the government directors, whom the bank party called spies. Biddle used his influence to secure this rejection,¹ but Jackson renominated the directors, and they were again rejected. The senate showed its displeasure further by repudiating Taney's nomination as secretary, and in 1835 they refused to confirm his nomination to a seat on the supreme bench, although in March, 1836, when the administration was somewhat stronger in the senate, he was by a strictly party vote confirmed as chief justice in succession to John Marshall. It was Taney's fortune to take an unpopular side in two important crises, but his mental acumen cannot be denied. During the rest of the administration he was the President's chief adviser and wrote for him many state papers, among them the *Farewell Address*.

The session of congress beginning in December, 1833, was a stormy one. In the house Jackson had a majority; in the senate he was in the minority, and his opponents embraced Clay, Calhoun, and Webster. Over six hundred petitions, chiefly from the trading and manufacturing towns of the seaboard, were sent to congress in reference to existing business distress. Most of them admitted that distress existed. Those prepared by the whigs claimed it was due to the removal of the deposits, and those which the democrats forwarded said that it came through the designs of Biddle. There can be no doubt that the politicians' pictures of distress increased the feeling of panic beyond its natural limits.

As deputation after deputation came to ask Jackson to restore the deposits he lost his temper. Let them go to Biddle, he said, and ask him to stop contraction. As for Jackson, he would never consent to re-charter the "mammoth of corruption";

¹Catterall, *Second Bank*, 309.

he had his foot on it and would not relinquish his advantage; sooner than favor restoration of the deposits or re-charter he would suffer ten Spanish inquisitions. Returning delegations reported much like this in reply to their requests. The tone was enough like his private letters to make it seem very probable, and after a while, probably by the advice of friends, he denied himself to all petitioners. Announcement of his furious replies produced disgust among thoughtful people, but such persons were arrayed against Jackson long before that. It pleased the masses to know that their hero would not relax his hold on the bank.

Early in the session Clay, accepted leader of the bank men, got the senate to call for the paper read before the cabinet on September 18th. Jackson refused on the ground that the senate had no right to call for a paper submitted to the cabinet. He meant no disrespect to the senate, he said, whose functions he would ever respect, but he would preserve the independence of the executive as a coördinate branch of the government.¹ It was a very firm reply, as dignified as the request itself, and it left Clay without ground of protest. The criticism that it was the act of a despot is baseless, since Jackson acted clearly within his constitutional rights. Nor is there force in the charge that he violated the secrecy of the cabinet in publishing the document. The President is not bound to keep secret his own utterances to the cabinet, especially in the case under consideration, where the utterance was a general defense of an action vitally interesting to the public.

December 26, 1833, Clay introduced two resolutions, one against Jackson's and the other against Taney's part in removing the deposits. After much debate they were amended and passed in the following form: "Resolved, (1) That the President, in the late executive proceedings in relation to the public

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, III., 36.

revenue, has assumed upon himself authority and power not conferred by the Constitution and the laws, but in derogation of both. (2) That the reasons assigned by the Secretary for the removal are unsatisfactory and insufficient." They were passed, the latter on February 5th, by a vote of twenty-eight to eighteen, the former on March 28th, the vote being twenty-six to twenty.

The resolution against Taney was to be expected, but how could that against Jackson be justified? Clay fell back on the phraseology of the law of 1789 creating the treasury department, in which congress, desiring to keep within its own hands the finances of the nation, assigned to the secretary specific duties and required him to report to congress, and not to the President, as other secretaries reported. Clay, therefore, held that the secretary of the treasury was the agent of congress, that under congress he had sole control of the deposits, and that the President's interference was unwarranted. The argument was weak because the President had power to remove the secretary of the treasury and congress knew it when it gave the latter the power to withdraw the deposits. The secretary, therefore, must exercise his control over the deposits subject to the power of the President to remove him, and congress must have intended this to be, or it would have provided otherwise in the charter.

To this attack Jackson sent a protest¹ in which he pronounced the senate's resolution unconstitutional. It was, he said, really a judicial act analagous to impeachment, for which the constitution provided a procedure. The argument was not convincing, but it served to introduce a long defense of all the President had done in the matter of removal, and it contained bodily copies of state resolutions approving his course. It was designed for an appeal to the people. The senate refused to enter it on the records, which gave his friends an opportunity to say he was

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, III., 69-94.

not only condemned without a hearing, but his protest in defense of his conduct was treated with contempt.

The composition of this protest illustrates Jackson's method of using his assistants. Butler worked on the legal side of it, Taney was worn out with other cares and probably did little, and to Kendall was assigned the task of presenting arguments of a political nature. But neither subordinate was left unaided. Jackson worked out each phase of the protest and sent it to the proper man for review and suggestion.¹

When these resolutions passed the senate it seemed to many that Jackson's defeat was sure. Some of his friends were doubtful and his enemies were jubilant. But he did not falter. He looked to the approval of the people, whose feelings he understood, because he was their representative. Although arguments were made on each side of the controversy then waging, it was a battle of passions, and in it his strong spirit was at its best. Every charge of calamity from the course he had pursued could be turned by ingenious statement into a charge of evils due to the bank; and the public mind was not sober enough to weigh the nice points in the case.

Jackson was not blindly guessing when he expressed confidence in the people. The election of 1832 showed how much they trusted him. As Van Buren said many years afterward, nothing but his popularity could have carried the people in the contest against the strongly intrenched bank. The congress which met in December, 1833, showed the effect. Although the senate, less responsive to popular will, was for the bank, the house was strongly against it. It showed its temper by reëlecting Stevenson, a thorough Jackson man, speaker, and by substituting James Knox Polk, equally committed to Jackson, as chairman of the ways and means committee, for McDuffie, Calhoun's

¹Jackson to Kendall, no date, but while this protest was being prepared. Cf. *Cincinnati Commercial*, February 4, 1879.

devoted agent. Removing the deposits completely identified the issue with Jackson, and Polk's aggressive policy forced members to support it or appear before the people as opponents of the President. Thus, while the senate passed a resolution for restoring the deposits, Polk was able to carry in the house four resolutions reported from his committee to the following purport: (1) That the bank should not be re-chartered, carried by a vote of one hundred and thirty-two to eighty-two; (2) that the deposits should not be restored, one hundred and eighteen to one hundred and three; (3) that state banks should keep the public funds, one hundred and seventeen to one hundred and five; and (4) that a select committee be appointed on the bank and on the commercial crisis, one hundred and seventy-one to forty-two. The margin of safety was not large, but it showed a great change in sentiment since 1832, when the charter passed the house by a vote of one hundred and seven to eighty-five.

Meanwhile the advocates of the bank showed weak points. In the first place, their opposition was partly factious. When the commercial panic became acute the bank held tightly to its funds, although it was evident that they were not immediately needed. A mild spirit at the time would have done it much credit in the public eye. Some of its friends took this as evidence that it had too much power. Biddle, who was cautious and rash by turns, now meant that the country should have enough of Jackson's financiering. "The relief," he said, "to be useful and permanent, must come from congress and from congress alone. If that body will do its duty, relief will come — if not, the bank feels no vocation to redress the wrongs inflicted by these miserable people. Rely upon that. This worthy President thinks that because he has scalped Indians and imprisoned judges he is to have his way with the bank. He is mistaken."¹ This was in February, 1834.

¹Catterall, *The Second Bank*, 339. The course of the bank in this connection is discussed in Catterall's chapter XIII.

Moreover, the senate majority was rent by dissension. Clay, Calhoun, and Webster each had his own plan of action. The last mentioned introduced a bill to extend the charter six years. Calhoun, thinking the time too short, moved to extend twelve years, but Clay would accept neither, and forced the others to inactivity in order to prevent open dissension. He was determined to lead or oppose the combination.

His triumph in the resolutions to censure Jackson was a barren victory. Already the country was going against the bank. People were getting accustomed to the financial distress and the poignancy of suffering was passing.¹ February 26th, Governor Wolf, of Pennsylvania, a consistent democrat, formerly friendly to the bank, sent a message to the legislature charging the bank with producing the pressure in the money market "to accomplish certain objects indispensable to its existence."² The party in that state came to his support to the dismay of Biddle. In New York at Governor Marcy's suggestion the state issued six millions of stock to be loaned to the banks to relieve their embarrassment.³

At this point Biddle was face to face with a revolt by the merchants, especially in New York. They formed a committee which said that if he did not resume discounts they would publish their conviction that he ought to do so. He hesitated, but at the end of March announced that loans would be resumed for a month. Immediately the public declared that this action showed that contraction had not been necessary, and the bank was never able to meet the charge. Men thought, all but the outspoken bank men, that Biddle had gone into a conflict with Andrew Jackson using for weapon his ability to create a money pressure, and they concluded that abandoning the weapon indicated his defeat.

¹Catterall, *Second Bank*, 336-337.

²Niles, *Register*, XLVI., 26.

³Hammond, *History of New York*, II., 441; Alexander, *Political History of New York*, I., 400.

The courage of the anti-bank men was admirable, their generalship was excellent, but their methods were not always commendable. Prejudice, ignorance, and selfishness abounded rather more than on the other side. For example, after denouncing the bank for creating distress, they declared when it resumed discounting that this was only done to create another opportunity to inflict a pressure.¹ Of the same nature was the plan early in 1834 of some old bank men and some of Jackson's supporters in New York to have a new bank for their own advantage. Van Buren would not countenance the scheme. It would have been unwise to crush one bank to build up another in which administration favorites had part, and popular indignation over such a thing must have fallen heavily on the vice-president, since his immediate supporters were in the scheme.²

The congressional elections of 1834 were made to turn on the bank question. The most excited feeling prevailed in the country; and Biddle, fearing personal violence, filled his house with armed men as the election approached. He was not molested, but the election went against him by a large majority, and the fate of the bank was sealed. The institution was so dead that some whig politicians began to rejoice that they would not again have to carry its weight of unpopularity. Its later history is not a part of this story.³

The shifting of public opinion was utilized by the administration leaders in the fight for the expunging resolutions. When Clay's motion of censure passed, Benton gave notice that he would move to expunge it and in the following session redeemed his promise. Clay charged Jackson with assuming power illegally, and Benton moved to expunge on the ground that the charge was false, unjust, and passed without giving the accused

¹Polk to Jackson, August 23, 1834, Jackson Mss.

²Van Buren to Thomas Jefferson (of New York), January 15, 1834; J. Hoyt to Van Buren, January 29, February 4, 1834, Van Buren Mss.

³For an account of the closing of the bank, see Catterall, *Second Bank*, chapter XV.

an opportunity to be heard. The resolution was, therefore, an indictment of the senatorial majority, the court of trial being the people. The only overt act to be alleged in support of Clay's charge was the dismissal of Duane, which was not unconstitutional. Benton's indictment, therefore, was essentially true, and Clay's impetuosity had placed his party in a bad position. The democrats made an issue of redressing the wrongs against Jackson, the people were rallied, state legislatures voted instructions to senators, and senators gave place to others who came fresh from the convinced people until the complexion of the senate was changed. As Benton said in announcing his purpose to keep the matter before the people until the expunging resolutions were passed, the decision was with the American people.

He thought he was beginning a contest of several years, but opinion developed so fast that victory came in less than three. December 26, 1836, the third anniversary of the day on which the condemnatory resolutions were introduced, he announced that retribution was about to be taken. After reading an exulting preamble he moved that black lines be drawn around the entry in the journal of the obnoxious resolutions and across it written the words, "Expunged by order of the Senate." The motion came up for adoption on January 16th. Foreseeing a long night session he provided in a committee room an abundance of hams, turkeys, roast beef, wines, coffee, and other food to sustain his friends through the struggle. His own friends said little, but Calhoun, Clay, and Webster in mournful speeches protested against what was about to be done. It was, they said, in violation of the constitution, which required a correct journal of the senate's proceedings. The resolution was carried by a vote of twenty-four to nineteen.¹

Benton's florid language does not hide the true meaning of the fight. Clay's initiative was wrong: he sought to crush Jackson

¹Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, I., 524-550, 545-549, 717-727.

and thought it would discredit a man to have the majority of the senate pronounce him guilty. The time had come when the people did not follow a senate vote blindly. Benton made them see the personal feeling in the attack of Clay, Webster, and Calhoun. Although his appeal contained both passion and misstatement, it rested on truth. The old school of politicians, Clay among them, were apt to think too little of the average man's ability to understand their real motives.

The expunging resolutions chiefly concerned the welfare of the party. For Jackson they were important as representing the end of his bank war. The revived nationalism of 1815-1820 expressed itself in the tariff, the movement for internal improvements, and the Second Bank. They were now all checked, and, besides that, the erratic desire for decentralization in South Carolina was suppressed, and the tendency to aristocratic institutions in the hands of the conservative republicans was replaced by a vigorous and well-organized democratic party. All these were the achievements of Jackson and the few men who supported him. They were the chief results of his administration. Probably no other President in time of peace has effected such important steps in our political history. But they are not Jackson's only achievements. The period of his power is also marked by notable events in foreign affairs and by such domestic actions as his Indian and land policies, all of which are yet to be examined.

CHAPTER XXX

AMERICAN DIPLOMACY UNDER JACKSON

THE phases of Jackson's administration thus far discussed relate to domestic politics. Of the other phases the most important is foreign affairs; and in this field it will be necessary to observe his dealings with Great Britain, France, and Mexico.

The West India Trade: When Jackson became President England persisted in her ancient policy of exploiting trade with her colonies for the benefit of her own merchants. The West India trade, closed to the United States when they became an independent nation, was still denied to them after much negotiating. In the treaty of Ghent, 1814, no relaxation was secured, nor were concessions obtained during Monroe's administrations. John Quincy Adams, secretary of state, whose vigorous policy served well against a nation as weak as Spain, could wring nothing from the mistress of the seas. The situation was not improved when he became President with the aggressive Clay for secretary of state. Retaliation succeeded here no better than in the days of Jefferson.

The development of this controversy was as follows: After due efforts at a diplomatic settlement Monroe in 1818 resorted to retaliation. At his suggestion congress closed American ports to British ships coming from the ports not regularly open to American ships. We thus meant to put England in our ports on the same footing in regard to the West India trade as she insisted on allowing us in the island ports. It was a hardship to the planters in the islands, for they found it convenient to

give themselves chiefly to sugar raising and to rely on the United States for their food supply.

Great Britain was anxious to save the planters and opened Halifax to American ships. This, she thought, would draw to that place the American products which had formerly gone to the islands and that they would be shipped thence to their former destination in her own ships. We met her move by tightening our own system. We forbade the exportation of our products to the West Indies in British ships and the importation of products from that place unless they came directly. These regulations, it must be remembered, did not concern our direct trade with England, which was not affected on either side.

In announcing the latter restriction our minister said we would modify it if England would make reciprocal concessions; but the British ministry treated the proposition with indifference. They soon had reason to change their views. The West Indian planters depended on the United States for certain supplies; and if they could not have them legally they would have them illegally. Smuggling, ever an attendant on the navigation laws, now became worse than before, and the British government could not stop it. Law-abiding planters protested against the situation, and in 1822 restrictions were made somewhat lighter. We were allowed to carry certain products to certain West India ports on paying colonial tariffs there plus 10 per cent. discriminating duty in favor of the Canadian and other British ports northeast of us.

In reply Monroe opened our ports to British ships bringing West India products, but he imposed on them a differential tonnage duty of one dollar a ton and a differential impost of 10 per cent. This concession did not concern our trade with the colonies on our northeast. The restrictions Monroe retained were thought to equalize those England retained, but to England they seemed excessive and she issued an order to collect a dif-

ferential tonnage duty of four shillings sixpence on American ships in the West Indies. Thus the evidences of a relaxing policy in 1822 disappeared in 1823, and the contest went on as formerly. Each side stuck to its position, and although attempts were made at a settlement through diplomacy the situation was unchanged for two years.

Finally, July 5, 1825, Parliament passed a new act which was a still further concession. Adams pronounced it ambiguous, but it offered us the same rights in the West Indies that we gave to English vessels in our waters, provided we accepted the offer in one year.¹ Congress failed to meet this offer, partly because the opposition flouted anything the administration was supposed to desire, and partly because the rising spirit of protection was instinctively against any suggestion of lower rates.

The President thought the affair could be settled by negotiation and sent Gallatin to London to see what could be done. He arrived after the year of grace expired and was met with news of a recent order to exclude our ships from the West Indies. By no persuasion could he get Canning, now Foreign Secretary, to open the door again which some months earlier we might have freely entered.²

British politics were then in a state of change, and the law of 1825 grew out of a wave of reform. The years 1822-1825 were very prosperous ones: revenues increased, taxes were reduced and made more logical, trade expanded, and the merchants were too well pleased to be intolerant of change. Behind the reforms of the day was a group of liberal men led by Huskisson and Robinson. They planned large things, but in December, 1825, the bubble of prosperity burst, the buoyancy of reform receded, and hope of changing the country's colonial trade relations went

¹For documents connected with this phase of the controversy, see *American State Papers, Foreign*, VI., 84, 214-247. See also, Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 184.

²*American State Papers, Foreign*, VI., 246-266, 294; Adams, *Life of Gallatin*, 615-620.

with it. Canning, who relished a policy of force if he thought it justifiable, remained obdurate until his death in 1827.¹

The position of Adams was characteristic. It was, also, just that which his father, minister to England in 1785, took when the West India trade first became a matter of negotiation after the revolution. He would convince England that her navigation laws were unwise; and England would not be convinced. He would make her see her true interests: Canning thought it humiliating in the mistress of the seas to be instructed by America. Loyalty to the national dignity and a willingness to hector his opponents came naturally to the rigid New Englander. We are not surprised that he closed his account of the affair by saying: "It becomes not the self-respect of the United States either to solicit gratuitous favors or to accept as the grant of a favor that for which an ample equivalent is exacted."² They were fine words, but they were not exactly applicable to the situation.

In the campaign of 1828 Adams was reproached for his failure to accept England's offer, and his successor felt obliged to try to undo the wrong which was alleged to have been done. McLane, minister to England, was impressed with the opportunity he had to achieve important results. He was very ambitious and saw in the business the pathway to the highest hopes. His instructions gave him every incentive to boldness. After reviewing the progress of the affair since 1815 Van Buren said plainly we had made three mistakes: one in denying that England should levy protecting duties in her colonies, another in requiring that British ships from the colonies to the United States should return thither, whereas England allowed our ships leaving her colonies to go anywhere, and another in failing to accept the offer

¹Walpole, *History of England*, II., 151-161, 168, 181-193.

²Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 383.

of 1825. McLane was to communicate as much of this to British minister as he saw fit.¹

We must not criticise Van Buren too severely for this attitude. The three errors he named are taken strictly from three which Gallatin announced in one of his first despatches from England in 1826.² Later on Gallatin added other reasons for the unhappy feeling over the question, but he thought the errors of our government very important. Van Buren, therefore, was only acknowledging openly what another had admitted in confidence to his superior.

But Van Buren's greatest departure from conventional methods of negotiating was his way of assuring England that his offer was reliable and justified. Our former policy, he said, had been submitted to the American people and by them rejected; and the present government now spoke with authority. "It should be sufficient," he added, "that the claims set up by them, and which caused the interruption of the trade in question, have been explicitly abandoned by those who first asserted them, and are not revived by their successors."

Van Buren's diplomacy was direct, that of his predecessor was formal. He undoubtedly violated the dignified conventions of the service, but he gave a clear and sensible turn to the business in hand. His practicality is shown in the form in which he would have the settlement embodied. The former administration had preferred to act through diplomacy and a treaty, he said; and the English government had stood for an act of the legislature. But he was willing to use either method, as was thought most convenient. He says that McLane himself, looking through the case before his departure for England, concluded that the only way to re-open it after England's summary decision in 1826 was to urge a change in American opinion

¹McLane's correspondence went to Congress, January 3, 1831, and was published in *Executive Documents*, 21st congress, 2nd session, number 24, page 64.

²Adams, *Life of Gallatin*, 617.

and asked permission to proceed on that basis. Jackson consented and McLane wrote his own instructions to that intent.¹

The British government received the American advance cordially, but Canada protested loudly. She had advantages in the West Indies which would be destroyed by the proposed agreement. Her protest delayed action several months, but Van Buren had private assurances that matters went well. Jackson's first annual message also helped to make yielding easy. "With Great Britain, alike distinguished in peace and war," said the message, "we may look forward to years of peaceful, honorable and elevated competition. Everything in the condition and history of the two nations is calculated to inspire sentiments of mutual respect and to carry conviction to the minds of both that it is their policy to preserve the most cordial relations."²

But the American position was not altogether conciliating. While it abandoned the contention of the past, it announced a positive attitude for the future. "Whatever be the disposition which His Majesty's government may now be pleased to make of this subject," said McLane to Lord Aberdeen, "it must necessarily be final, and indicative of the policy to which it will be necessary, in future, to adapt the commercial relations of each country." One who knew Jackson could not doubt the meaning of these words.

Waiting without results at last began to exhaust the President's patience, and April 10, 1830, he wrote Van Buren as follows:

We ought to be prepared to act promptly in case of a failure. We have held out terms of reconciling our differences with that nation of the most frank and fair terms. Terms which, if England really had a wish to harmonize, and act fairly towards us, ought to have been met in that spirit of frankness and candor

¹Van Buren, *Autobiography*, V., 61, Van Buren Mss.

²Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 443.

and friendship with which we proposed them. These terms being rejected our national character and honor requires, that we should now act with that promptness and energy due to our national character. Therefore let a communication be prepared for Congress recommending a non-intercourse law between the United States and Canady, and a sufficient number of cutters commanded by our naval officers and our own midshipmen made revenue officers and a double set on every vessel &c., &c. This adopted and carried into effect forthwith and in six months both Canady and the West India Islands will feel, and sorely feel, the effects of their folly in urging their government to adhere to our exclusion from the West India trade. Will Mr. Van Buren think of these suggestions and see me early on Monday to confer upon this subject? ¹

April 6, 1830, after six months of waiting, McLane hinted to Van Buren that an act of congress might pave the way for success, and May 29th such a law was passed. It authorized the President to grant the necessary privileges to British ships as soon as he knew that England would give us similar terms.² This was followed by complete success in London. The British restrictions were removed, and October 5, 1830, Jackson issued a proclamation opening the trade with the islands.³

The arrangement merely opened the American and West India ports respectively to the ships of the other nations without restriction as to tonnage or place of departure. It did not lessen the right of either nation to lay imposts in the islands or at home. Under this feature of the case the British government imposed such duties that the American trade suffered greatly, and opponents of Jackson declared that the boasted diplomatic triumph of the administration was as nothing. But we never could hope to prevent another nation from collecting duties, most of all when we were committed to our own tariff policy;

¹Jackson Mss.

²Peters, *United States Statutes at Large*, III., 419.

³Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 497.

and we had removed an unpleasant source of international irritation.

Opponents of Jackson have said that it was the failure of the British colonial policy more than diplomatic ability that won the settlement of 1830. On the other hand, the British ministry was more disposed to relax in 1825 than in 1830. This was partly due to the strong movement for economic reform in the former year. In the latter the whole kingdom was still alive for reform, but of a political kind. So far as the break-up of the old system of restriction was concerned, all was done in 1825 that was done later. The task was to remove from the minds of the ministry the determination to resent the tone of American diplomacy, and that was done by the direct and practical methods under Jackson's direction.

The French Spoliation Claims. Since 1815 American citizens had claims against France for destruction of property under Napoleon. Like the matter of West India trade, they long encumbered our diplomacy, and it was wise to have them settled. W. C. Rives, of Virginia, who went to France as minister, was instructed to settle the claims if possible. European nations had similar claims in 1815, but they were soon paid: Americans felt the sting which their own position thus involved.

Rives arrived in Paris in the autumn of 1829, just after the Martignac ministry was replaced by the reactionary Polignac, a change which he thought unpropitious for his hopes. Polignac's first position was that France could not pay for Napoleon's spoliation, but when reminded that she paid other similar claims and that the United States should insist that the nation was responsible for the acts of the *de facto* government he promised to look into the matter.

Rives pressed the subject steadily, and two months later the ministry agreed that they ought to pay for American property destroyed at sea, but were not liable for seizures under the Berlin

and Milan decrees. Rives took this for a favorable sign, but soon learned that the minister was bent on delay. A reference in Jackson's first annual message to a possible "collision" with France was construed as offensive, and it took much patience on Rives's part to smooth matters. Finally, on February 12, 1830, Polignac admitted that the Berlin and Milan decrees grossly violated the law of nations, but said it would bankrupt the country to pay all the damages from Napoleon's violations of that law. Under the pressure of Rives's continued demands he agreed that he might be willing to pay for the seizures at sea and for some of those under the offensive decrees. Rives disclaimed any special desire to establish his theory and said he would be satisfied with payment for losses, whatever ground it was placed on. It was agreed that a project be submitted to the king and ministry for a commission to consider the claims specifically, and a few days later it was announced that the plan was approved.

At this point the chambers met in the beginning of March. They were bitterly opposed to the king for many illegal actions; paying the American claims was unpopular because it would necessitate increased taxes; and the opposition used the occasion to weaken the government with the people of France. Rives, deeply alarmed, called on Lafayette, still a firm friend of America, who by his influence was able to secure the silence or moderation of several important newspapers, and thus the danger was alleviated.

But immediately another obstacle appeared in certain counter claims France brought forward. The eighth article of the Louisiana purchase treaty provided that French ships should have the privileges of the most favored nation in American ports, and damages were now asked because losses were incurred in the troublous times of Jefferson and Madison. It was a strained interpretation, but Rives saw it would embarrass the

negotiations and wrote to Van Buren for permission to offer to meet it by reducing the duty on French wines imported into America. The request was granted, and May 20th he mentioned it to Polignac, whose willingness to conciliate the commercial interests of his country prompted him to receive it gladly. Hope again revived, only to be dashed to the ground when on June 8th an investigating committee reported against the claims on the ground that Napoleon himself would not have paid them. The despairing and disgusted Rives expressed his feelings in a private letter in which he said: "In the diplomacy of this government nothing is certain but what is past and irrevocable. Indeed, in my transactions with them I have almost come to adopt the vulgar rule of interpreting dreams, and from what is said to conclude that the precise contrary will be done."

A week later affairs brightened without apparent cause. Polignac became amiable and proposed a commercial treaty in which should be included the concession on wines. It was about to be consummated, when the revolution of July 26-30 drove Charles X into exile and placed Louis Philippe on the throne. Negotiations now ceased; and the unwillingness of the new government to increase the taxes left little hope that the business would soon be resumed.

Yet on September 9th Rives took it up again, only to be met by a refusal. Molé, the new foreign minister, said the claims were just, but the government needed money too badly to think of assuming their payment. Rives, however, persisted and secured a commission to examine them specifically. On it served G. W. Lafayette, son of the Revolutionary hero. The king interested himself in the matter, professing his sympathy for our claims, and urging us to have patience.

Matters were really progressing; and added promise came from a handsome allusion to the king which Jackson, at Rives's suggestion, incorporated in his second annual message.

Finally the commission concluded its labors late in March, 1831. The majority would not allow the claims under the decrees, but were willing to pay ten million francs for other losses. The minority — G. W. Lafayette and Pinchon — admitted both kinds of claims and fixed the damages at thirty million francs.

Subsequently Sebastiani, then the foreign minister, communicated the decision to Rives and said the ministry, willing to be liberal, would pay fifteen millions. Rives was indignant and said it was mockery to talk of that sum and if the offer was definitive the negotiation was at an end. Sebastiani said it was not definitive but told him to reflect on it. A fortnight later he offered twenty-four millions, when Rives said he would settle for forty millions. After some other higgling they compromised on twenty-five million francs, and it was agreed that we should pay France one and a half millions for seizures on our own part, and the reduction of wine duties was to be made as an offset for the claims under the eighth article of the Louisiana treaty. These terms were embodied in a treaty which was duly signed July 4, 1831. It was a notable triumph for which Rives's energy, tact, and patience were mostly responsible. It pleased the American people, who saw in it another illustration of Jackson's just but vigorous methods of clearing our diplomacy of old issues.¹

The treaty, ratified February 2, 1832, provided for payment in six annual instalments, the first a year after ratification. But no money could be paid until it was voted by the chambers, and as French public opinion thought the amount agreed upon too large the chambers were loath to execute the treaty. It was not until they were about to adjourn after an eight months' session that the matter was taken up, and then it was dismissed without action. In the meantime, the secretary of the treasury

¹The facts for this narrative of the French negotiation are taken from the records in the office of the secretary of state in Washington, *France*, volumes 24-27. For the treaty of 1831, see Haswell, *Treaties and Conventions*, 345.

drew a draft on the French government for the first instalment, which, forwarded through the United States Bank, was duly protested for lack of funds. On this transaction Biddle demanded the usual protest charges amounting to nearly one hundred and seventy thousand dollars. One hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars of this sum were for damages, the rest for protest cost, interest, and re-exchange. The administration was willing to pay all but the item for damages. The demand was within the meaning of the law, but to Jackson and to most people it seemed unfair for the rich bank to exact the last pound of flesh, especially since it handled so large a portion of surplus government funds without paying interest on them. This was in May, 1833, and had something to do with the determination to remove the deposits. Jackson took refuge behind the government's immunity from a suit and refused to pay the bill. When in July, 1834, Biddle deducted the amount from the government's dividend as a stockholder in the bank the wrath of the administration was unbounded.

In September, 1833, Livingston, succeeding Rives, arrived in Paris and addressed himself to the problem of getting the treaty executed. The king and ministry professed themselves ready to pay, but the chambers were obdurate, and with them Livingston could have no relations. He concluded that nothing but a show of force would reach the ears of the French people, long accustomed to despise us. He hinted at such a course to the ministry and broadly suggested to Jackson that the coming annual message take a firm tone.

The suggestion was so quickly seized that it may be doubted if it was necessary. In fact, June 6th Jackson ordered the navy to be ready for service.¹ October 5th he said, "There is nothing now left for me but a recommendation of strong measures." Van Buren, now a close adviser in all things, gave his approval

¹Jackson to the Secretary of the Navy, June 6, 1834, Jackson MSS.

of an energetic policy. "Your past forbearance," he wrote, "will now come to our aid, and the opposition will, I trust, before winter be whipt."

The message bore witness to the President's earnestness. It recounted the efforts to induce France to execute the treaty, gave the king credit for his intention to urge the chamber at its next session to vote the money, and declared that the President had exhausted his resources. If congress wished to await the action of the French chambers, nothing need be attempted during its coming short session; but if from the omission of the chambers in five sessions to provide for the execution of a solemn treaty it should doubt their intention to execute it, congress must determine for itself what course should be followed. "Our institutions are essentially pacific," said he in dismissing the subject. "Peace and friendly intercourse with all nations are as much the desire of our government as they are the interests of our people. But these objects are not to be permanently secured by surrendering the rights, or permitting the solemn treaties for their indemnity in cases of flagrant wrong, to be abrogated or set aside." He dismissed the subject by recommending that if France did not pay we seize enough French property, public or private, to satisfy the claim.¹

The message reached France early in January and raised a storm of anger. But it also showed the people they faced a crisis and made the world see that the supineness of American diplomacy was past. Livingston reported that the higher respect for our government was discernible in the attitude of his fellow ministers in Paris.

The French ministry dared not acquiesce in the position taken by Jackson. They held that the national faith was impeached, and after five days informed Livingston that they had recalled their minister in Washington and added that Livingston's

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, III., 200-206.

passport was at his disposal. But our representative was not willing to leave his post without a more definite dismissal. He held on for awhile and received instruction as to his conduct. If the chambers did not pass a law then before them to pay the money Livingston would close the legation and leave Paris; if they passed it he might leave the legation in the hands of a *chargé d'affaires* and retire to a neighboring country.

The law referred to was not defeated. It hung fire a long time and finally passed with the proviso that the money should not be paid until satisfactory explanation was made of the language of the annual message. Livingston at once left affairs in the hands of Barton, *charge*, and sailed for home on the *Constitution*, which by orders awaited his departure at Havre. He protested as he went that France had no right to require explanation of words in the President's message, a paper solely for the information of congress.

The law in question was sent to Pageot, *charge* in Washington, who offered to read it to Forsyth, now secretary of state. But Jackson forbade such recognition, saying: "We would not permit any foreign nation to discuss such a subject. Nor would we permit any or all foreign nations to interfere with our domestic concerns, or to arrogate to themselves the right to take offence at the mode, manner, or phraseology of the President's message or any official communication between the different co-ordinate or other branches of our government."¹

Barton, in Paris, was at the same time instructed² that he must not discuss the message or give any explanation of it. He was directed to inform the French ministry that the Rothschilds were our agents to receive the money due. If it was not paid in three days he was to make a last formal demand for it: if it was not then paid within five days more, he was to demand his passports,

¹Jackson to Livingston, September 9th; *ibid* to Forsyth, September 6, 1835, Jackson Mss.

²Jackson to Barton instructions. draft in Jackson's hand, September 6, 1835, Jackson Mss.

close the legation, and come home. He complied with instructions, but the only reply of the ministry was that they were ready to pay the money as soon as the United States would declare that they "did not intend to call in question the good faith of His Majesty's government." Barton could make no such concession. November 8th he asked for his passports, and three weeks later left Paris, closing the legation until the appearance of Cass, December 1, 1836.¹

When in September, 1835, Pageot offered to communicate to Forsyth the French law disposing of the matter he read, also informally, a letter in explanation of the case. Forsyth refused to receive it or to take a copy, but it contained the French defense. It admitted that the law to pay the money was thrice presented to the chamber and once rejected, and that it was not presented to the short session of August, 1835; but this was because the king felt that it would be rejected at that session. It declared what seemed to be true, that the ministry sincerely desired to execute the treaty. As to Jackson's contention that a foreign government could no more notice a President's message than a committee report or a speech in congress, the reply was that France did not demand a categorical denial, but only assumed that a disclaimer would be made and suspended action until it came. In view of assurances to Barton, this feature of the explanation was merely a quibble.

The French complication had its influence on political conditions. In the senate Clay introduced resolutions which passed unanimously, declaring that legislative action ought not to be taken. In France they were cited in debate to show that Jackson was not supported in congress. The house was less hostile. It resolved that the treaty ought to be executed and that steps should be taken to meet any probable emergency.

¹Livingston's and Barton's reports are in *Letters from Ministers*, state department, *France*, volume 27. Their instructions are in *Instruction, France*, volume for 1829-1844. See also, Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, III., 130-132, 135-145, 173-185, 193-197.

This happened in January and February, 1835. As the months passed public opinion sobered. There was little real apprehension of war, but the whigs affected to believe that it might come through the rashness of an irascible old man. The message of 1834 was, in fact, needlessly strong. Members of the President's own party urged him to be moderate in the next annual message.¹ They had some effect, although they did not seriously modify his private views. If France were an honorable nation, he said privately, she would pay the money and demand an apology afterward; that was what Napoleon would have done. But from Maine to Florida came the voice, "No apology, no explanation — my heart cordially responds to that voice."²

The message of 1835 showed careful treatment. There was a long review of the French affair justifying what had been done, but expressed in terms of restraint; there was also a specific denial of any intention "to menace or insult" France, and the case was closed in these words:

France having now through all the branches of her government acknowledged the validity of our claims and the obligation of the treaty of 1831, and there really existing no adequate cause for further delay, will at length, it may be hoped, adopt the course which the interest of both nations, not less than the principles of justice, so imperiously require. The treaty being once executed on her part, little will remain to disturb the friendly relations of the two countries — nothing, indeed which will not yield to the suggestions of a pacific and enlightened policy and to the influence of that mutual good will and of those generous recollections which we may confidently expect will then be revived in all their ancient force. In any event, however, the principle involved in the new aspect which has been given to the controversy is so vitally important to the independent administration of the Government that it can

¹Gooch to Jackson, November 28, 1835, Jackson MSS; Ritchie to Van Buren, November 28, 1835; J. A. Hamilton to Van Buren, January 20, 1836, Van Buren MSS.

²An undated draft, destination not given, in Jackson's handwriting, Jackson MSS.

neither be surrendered nor compromitted without national degradation. I hope it is unnecessary for me to say that such a sacrifice will not be made through any agency of mine. The honor of my country shall never be stained by an apology from me for the statement of truth and the performance of duty."¹

It is not difficult to guess what parts of this paragraph were in Jackson's original draft.

By this time it was evident that neither nation desired war, and France accepted the pacific utterances in the message as sufficient disclaimer. Before this was known in Washington Barton arrived with news of the last acts of his residence in Paris. Jackson sent another message, January 15, 1836, softened probably through the efforts of Livingston, in which he firmly insisted on his position and suggested that if the money was not paid we should exclude French ships and goods from our ports. Before it could be known in France a settlement was practically arranged. January 27th, Bankhead, British *chargé* in Washington, offered the services of his nation to mediate the dispute and each side accepted. He next announced that France was satisfied with the message of December, 1835, and would pay the money. All trouble disappeared quickly, and May 10th Jackson sent a gracious message announcing that four of the six instalments were already paid and cordial relations with France were reëstablished.²

One characteristic touch closed the incident: February 16th Livingston wrote inclosing a letter from Baron de Rothschild intimating that France would receive a minister and that Livingston's reappointment would be agreeable. Livingston closed his letter by admitting that he had a "desire of enjoying on the spot the triumph of your firm and energetic measures."³

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, III., 160.

²Hunt, *Life of Livingston*, 428; Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, III., 188-193, 213, 215-222, 227.

³Jackson Mss.

Such flattery was supposed to be most effective with Jackson, but here it had no power. Cass got the appointment to Paris, and Livingston retired to private life.

Relations with Mexico: In the treaty with Spain, 1819, the United States gave up their claim to Texas in order to make sure of Florida. Many people, some of them politicians of influence, like John Quincy Adams, hoped to purchase what the treaty relinquished. Jackson, who consented to the treaty because at the time he thought more of Florida than of Texas, had the general Southwestern feeling for Texas, but he refused the offer to be our first minister to Mexico after that nation became independent.¹ Ninian Edwards, to whom the place was next offered, was recalled before he reached his destination; and Poinsett, dispatched early in Adams's administration, first took up the task of arranging a commercial treaty between the two powers. Acting on instructions from Clay, he tried to get the new republic to accept the Rio Grande, or some other point south of the Sabine, for our boundary. Mexico took this as an attempt to profit by her weakness, her suspicions of our motives were aroused, and she steadily refused to yield to our plans. Poinsett was then directed to offer one million dollars for Texas, but he concluded that to do so would only enrage that power, and did not mention the offer. Instead, he concluded a commercial treaty in 1828 in which the Sabine was declared the boundary.

When Jackson became President this treaty was not ratified. He suspended action upon it and sought to reopen negotiations for the purchase of Texas. Expressing himself confidentially to Van Buren he said that he thought two million dollars would serve to amend the Mexican constitution so as to allow a sale of a part of the domain, and he was willing to give five millions to get Texas to the "great prairie or desert." He believed we

¹Jackson to Adams, March 15, 1823, MSS. in state department.

ought to have this region, because a foreign power ought not to have the tributaries of the Mississippi and because "the God of the universe had intended this great valley to belong to one nation."¹

Next day he outlined Poinsett's instructions and sent them to Van Buren. He pointed out the following advantages to Mexico if she sold us Texas: the boundary would be a natural one, the money would enable Mexico to maintain herself against Spain, the danger of a conflict between her citizens and ours would vanish, the difficulty of managing the Texans be obviated, and finally by surrendering the territory as a mark of esteem for a sister republic she would show herself "worthy of that reciprocal spirit of friendship which should forever characterize the feelings of the two governments toward each other."

Our objects in getting Texas were: the safety of New Orleans and the Mississippi valley, the need of new territory for the Indians who must be moved from the East, and the acquisition of a natural boundary. He thought the middle of the great desert would be such a boundary, and if that could be obtained he would pay not more than five millions.²

Meanwhile Poinsett was in trouble in Mexico. He took the side of the party favoring a democratic government, aroused the anger of an opposing faction which made capital out of the suggestion that the domain was about to be divided, and resolutions were passed against him in the legislature of one of the confederated states. He was no longer useful, and Jackson recalled him, but in doing so sought to save his feelings in all possible particulars. He even protested against the resolutions concerning Poinsett.

Poinsett was succeeded by Col. Anthony Butler, a former military comrade of Jackson, whose diplomacy proved to be

¹Jackson to Van Buren, August 12, 1829, Van Buren Mss.

²The draft is preserved in the Jackson Mss. and also in the Van Buren Mss. See also, Reeves, *Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk*, 65, note 11.

bad. The years during which he directed our affairs in Mexico are pronounced by Professor Reeves "a seven years' period of cheap trickery."¹ He led Jackson to think that Texas could be purchased by proper negotiation and he produced on the Mexican government and people the worst opinion of our aim and honesty. His chief object seems to have been to prolong his period of employment and to overcast his failure by deluding the administration with false hopes. He wrote many personal letters to Jackson in which he promised everything but fulfilled nothing.² In April, 1831, he confirmed Poinsett's commercial treaty of 1828 and in a separate agreement accepted the boundary of 1819. Both were ratified and promulgated by the American government in 1832.³

Buying Texas, the greatest object of his mission, was thus left to further negotiation. As no direct offer moved the Mexicans, Butler tried indirection. He referred to Jackson a plan to pay five million dollars, part to Mexico and part to the adventurers who had acquired vast land grants in Texas. The scheme contained great possibility of fraud. Jackson said in reply that we would not take Texas subject to any land grant except Austin's, that we would pay the money to Mexico, and cared nothing about what she did with it, but that Butler must take the greatest care to avoid "the imputation of corruption."

This was not encouraging, and in 1835 Butler appeared in Washington to urge in person a still more doubtful scheme. He brought a letter purporting to be from Hernandez, a priest in Santa Anna's household, saying that for a bribe of half a million to be distributed where needed the sale could be made for five million dollars. On it Jackson endorsed the following:

¹Reeves, *Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk*, 69.

²The Jackson MSS. contain many private letters from Butler to Jackson, with replies of the former. See February 27, 1832, October 28, 1833, February 6, March 7 and October 2, 1834: of the latter, see April 19, 1832, and November 27, 1833, with endorsements on Butler's letters.

³Reeves, *Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk*, 69-74; see also, Adams, *Memoirs*, XI., 343. The Hernandez letter is in the Jackson MSS. under date March 22, 1835.

Nothing will be countenanced by the Executive to bring the Government under the remotest imputation of being engaged in corruption or bribery. We have no concern in the application of the consideration to be given. The public functionary of Mexico may apply it as they deem proper to extinguish *private claims* and give us the cession clear of all incumbrances except the grants which have been complied with. A. J. June 22-35.

The reader will give his own interpretation to these words. To the writer they seem to show that Jackson was a practical man among other practical men, and that he was not shocked at the idea of bribery, but was careful that he should not commit it. That he did not dismiss Butler indicates a dull conscience on the point. But he was not willing to tolerate dallying. Butler was alarmed at the tone taken toward him and protested that he could finish the business if given another chance. He was sent off to his post with the information that something must be done before the annual message was prepared. His renewed despatches were, however, in the old tone of apology and delay, and December 16th he was recalled. Powhatan Ellis, his successor, quickly realized the true situation of affairs in Mexico and gave up the plans for purchasing Texas.

Later Butler's proposition became known to the public, and he sought to justify himself by saying that in a private conversation Jackson gave it his approval. He said he was authorized to distribute eight hundred thousand dollars of the purchase money where it would be useful and that Santa Anna was to get one fourth of the amount.¹ Jackson denied the charge and pronounced its maker a liar. It is a point of veracity which defies certainty. Butler's course as minister leaves us little disposition to accept his word; and Jackson's memory on points of controversy was apt to be bad. His memorandum quoted above probably expresses his real attitude at the time.

¹A. Butler to Jackson, July 28, 1834, Jackson MSS. Jackson's denial is endorsed on this letter also.



ANDREW JACKSON IN 1835. AGE 68

From a painting by Major R. E. W. Earl who lived with Jackson in the White House and had orders for many portraits. Political opponents called him the "King's Painter." In this picture the posture is characteristic, but the expression of the mouth is like that of most of the portraits by Earl, and was considered unsatisfactory by the friends of Jackson

By this time the province was in the throes of revolution, and Mexican diplomacy took another turn. A large number of claims of American citizens against Mexico were taken up vigorously. Ellis was ordered to press their adjustment and if not successful to demand his passport. He followed instructions faithfully, met a refusal, and December 16, 1836, left Mexico, where we had no other minister for three years.¹

One of the severest charges against Jackson in connection with Texas was aiding the revolutionists. It grew partly out of his desire for the province and more particularly out of his friendship for Samuel Houston, Texan leader. The first thing in connection with this charge is a note in his own handwriting in a fragmentary journal which he kept for a time after he became President. It reads:

May 21, 1829 — recd from Genl. Duff Green an extract of a letter (Doctor Marable to Genl. G) containing declarations of Gov. Houston, late of Tennessee, that he would conquer Mexico or Texas, and be worth two millions in two years, &c. Believing this to be the efusions of a distempered brain, but as a precautionary measure I directed the Secretary of War to write and inclose to Mr. Pope, Govr of Arkansas, the extract, and instruct him if such illegal project should be discovered to exist to adopt prompt measures to put it down and give the government the earliest intelligence of such illegal enterprise with the names of all those who may be concerned therein.²

Of similar significance is the following: In the year 1830, Houston was in Washington, where he fell in with a Dr. Robert Mayo. He spoke about his plans and Mayo revealed them to Jackson in a long letter. The latter endorsed the letter and ordered that William Fulton, secretary of Arkansas Territory, be informed of the report. Such a letter was written to Fulton

¹Reeves, *Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk*, 76.

²Jackson Mss.

stating that the allegation was probably erroneous, but that careful watch should be made for attacks on Texas, and if such should be probable to communicate with the President. A copy of this letter was placed with Mayo's and they remained in Jackson's possession until he was about to leave Washington. Then they were both sent to Mayo, who placed them in the hands of John Quincy Adams. Jackson's Fulton letter was then read in the house of representatives by the New Englander as evidence that Jackson favored Houston's designs. Jackson did not know he returned the copy of the letter to Fulton with Mayo's and persisted in thinking that it was stolen from his files. He made, also, some bitter remarks about Adams for his supposed part in the transaction. But his treatment of Mayo's letter is like that of Marable's, and the two incidents show pretty clearly that he proposed to preserve neutrality, at least outwardly, which, in view of American feeling, was about all that could be expected.

Nor can it be held that he desired Texas in order to increase slave territory. As a slaveholder he probably sympathized with the feeling that the institution should have a normal field for growth, but he wanted the province beyond the Sabine for national reasons. When President Burnet of Texas sent him a letter justifying annexation on sectional and political grounds, he repudiated the argument, saying that nationality was the only sufficient basis for such a policy.¹

In the beginning of the revolution Jackson ordered the district attorneys to prosecute violators of neutrality "when indications warranted,"² but the instructions were generally disregarded. Agents openly collected bands of "emigrants" for Texas who made no secret that they would fight for the revolutionists. Without their help Texas could not have defeated Mexico. It

¹From copy of a letter in Van Buren MSS., without date, endorsed by Van Buren, "President's Letter."

²Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, III., 151.

is said that most of them returned to their former homes after the war. Public opinion supported them, and it would have been difficult for the government to detain them had it been more serious in its efforts to do so.

Fighting began in October, 1835; and in the following January, General Gaines, commanding the Western department, was ordered to the Louisiana border to protect it from Indian attacks, no signs of which were visible. He was ordered to cross the Sabine if necessary as far as Nacogdoches, fifty miles within the province of Texas. He was given the 6th regiment and called on each of the governors of four neighboring states for one thousand mounted riflemen. When the Texans won their victory at San Jacinto, April 21st, he was twenty-five miles north of the boundary waiting for the riflemen. He now concluded they would not be needed and suspended the call. It was afterward pointed out that at this time it was generally believed in Texas that the war was over. But a few weeks later it was known that Mexico was preparing to renew the struggle. About the same time two white men were killed by Caddo Indians near Nacogdoches, and some white women and children were taken prisoners. Gaines declared these Indians must be overawed and in June, 1836, threw two hundred men into that place and with the rest of his force encamped on the Sabine.¹ There was no real danger from the Indians, and it is hard to believe that Gaines's movements were not made with an eye on the development in Texas.¹

When Gaines decided to occupy Nacogdoches he called out the militia the second time. Jackson was at the "Hermitage" when news of it came to Tennessee. The governor responded with eagerness and asked Jackson if he might send more men than were required of him. He was told in reply that Gaines's

¹Report of secretary of war, *Congressional Debates*, XIII., part 2, page 23; correspondence of Gorostiza with Forsyth and Dickins; *ibid*, XIV., part 2, 178.

call was overruled as unnecessary and that no troops were to be sent unless orders came direct from the war department. To the governor of Kentucky he sent the same directions. This seems to have been on Jackson's own initiative. A few days later he received a letter from Kendall in Washington saying that Gaines's advance was ill-advised and ought to be retraced. September 4, 1836, he ordered that general to observe strict neutrality, not to enter Texas unless the Mexicans failed to restrain the Indians, and to hold no correspondence with either Texas or Mexican leaders.

As soon as the Texans began to fight they appealed to Jackson for recognition of independence or annexation. While Houston was fleeing before the advancing Santa Anna, six days before San Jacinto, Stephen Austin sent an earnest appeal. "Oh, my countrymen," he cried, "the warm-hearted, chivalrous, impulsive West and South are *up* and *moving* in favor of Texas. The calculating and more prudent, tho' not less noble-minded North are aroused. . . . Will you turn a deaf ear?"¹ This appeal came as a letter to the President, cabinet, and congress. On the back of it Jackson wrote: "The writer does not reflect that we have a treaty with Mexico, and that our national faith is pledged to support it. The Texans before they took the step to declare themselves Independent which has aroused and united all Mexico against them ought to have pondered well. It was a rash and premature act, our neutrality must be faithfully maintained. A. J."²

The victory at San Jacinto changed the aspect of affairs. Commissioners came now to ask for annexation, on the following terms: (1) confirmation of the Texan laws, (2) assumption of Texan debts, (3) guarantee of land titles to *bona fide* settlers, (4) the recognition of slavery, and (5) liberal appropriation of

¹Cannon to Jackson, August 4; Jackson to Cannon, August 5th; *ibid* to Governor of Kentucky, August 7th; Kendall to Jackson, August 3rd; Jackson to Gaines, September 4, 1836; Jackson Mss.

²Jackson Mss.

land to education.¹ The indorsement on Austin's letter indicates that Jackson was not entirely enthusiastic for the strugglers. His action in the summer in regard to recognition and annexation confirms the view. June 6th the house of representatives resolved to recognize the independence of the province as soon as it had an established government. He accordingly sent a confidential agent beyond the Sabine to report on conditions there, and to the Texans he would promise nothing until he had definite information. He was following the example of Monroe in recognizing the South American states. The reports from the agent, Morfit, were adverse to Texas. The inhabitants, he said, were few and widely distributed, and probably not able to maintain themselves against their enemies. In a private letter to Jackson, Houston confessed that the new state could not sustain itself and appealed to his old friend to save it.² December 21st the President in a special message recommended that recognition of independence be deferred.³ It was believed that Van Buren inspired it.⁴ Certainly on December 8th Jackson was willing to let congress act.⁵

The Texans were greatly disappointed, but they soon found grounds to hope for better things. Sentiment in the country developed, and talk of action by congress was heard. February 2, 1837, Jackson took up the matter with the chairman of the house committee on foreign affairs. He had come to think that England was about to recognize Texas.⁶ March 1st the senate resolved to extend recognition and the house voted to pay the expenses of a minister to the republic if the President saw fit to appoint one.

¹Forsyth to Jackson, July 15, 1836, Jackson MSS.

²Houston to Jackson, November 20, 1836; see Miss Ethel Z. Rather, *The Annexation of Texas*, published in the *Quarterly* of the Historical Association of Texas, 1910.

³Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, III., 265; for some of Morfit's reports see *Congressional Debates*, XIII., part 2, page 82.

⁴Van Buren to John Van Buren, December 22, 1835; W. Irving to Van Buren, February 24, 1836; Van Buren MSS.

⁵Jackson to Kendall, December 8, 1836, *Cincinnati Commercial*, February 4, 1879.

⁶Jackson to Howard, February 2, 1837, Jackson MSS.

When this matter came up the presidential election of 1830 was approaching. The bank was dead legally, but the whigs openly declared their purpose to restore it. Jackson was extremely anxious to avoid anything which would weaken Van Buren's chances in the election or divide the democrats in congress. He and the New York group must have seen that the administration could not afford to identify itself too far with Texas. It was, said he to congress, a very delicate matter. The delicateness of it lay in the fact that Americans of the South and Southwest had revolutionized the province, Gaines standing conveniently by as an apparent resource in time of trouble. Hastily to recognize Texan independence would have the air of an indorsement by the administration, and that would imperil Van Buren's chances and threaten the continuation of Jackson's policies.

In the summer Jackson received a letter from captive Santa Anna proposing American interposition between Mexico and the resisting Texans. He replied that he would be pleased to extend the good offices of his country when he knew that Mexico desired them. He permitted the proposer to go to Washington to try to make some arrangement of a pacific nature. Santa Anna arrived early in 1837. He was well received and set out for his home in February, promising to use his efforts for peace. In Mexico his influence was superseded by a rival, and he retired to his estate until a new revolution gave him an opportunity to regain power. Jackson thought Santa Anna a true friend of Texas.¹

The only surviving evidence of his relations with Jackson in Washington is an undated memorandum in Jackson's hand which seems to refer to this period. It relates to a communication with Santa Anna and contains an offer of three and a half millions for Texas, not as a purchase but as a concession

¹Lewis to Houston, Oct. 27, 1836, Mss. in New York Public Library.

on our part, the boundary to be the Rio Grande to thirty degrees latitude and thence west to the Pacific. Santa Anna, for his part, agreed to use his influence for peace.¹

Jackson's diplomacy satisfied the nation. What it lacked in dignity it gained in strength. It secured American interests in the West India trade, the French claims, and the Texas matter. In regard to the last his course was moderate and national. Had he taken the view of either extreme he must have driven the other to desperation. As he said repeatedly in the close of his administration, he chiefly desired to repress the growing sectionalism which came from the efforts of designing men. Both his principles and his desire to make Van Buren President were in support of this feeling.

Abroad Jackson's diplomacy was well respected. Foreigners thought less than we about his diplomatic form. They saw chiefly the results of his forceful will. He brought a greater respect for American rights into their minds than any man since Washington. Van Buren reporting a conversation with Palmerston writes: "He said that a very strong impression had been made here (in London) of the dangers which this country had to apprehend from your elevation, but that they had experienced better treatment at your hands than they had done from any of your predecessors."²

¹Jackson Mss. The correspondence of Jackson and Santa Anna is also in the Jackson Mss., July 4 and September 4, 1836. See also Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, III., 274-276.

²Van Buren to Jackson, September 28, 1831; Van Buren, *Autobiography*, III., 94.

CHAPTER XXXI

MINOR PROBLEMS OF THE TWO ADMINISTRATIONS

BESIDES the matter already considered, Jackson had to deal with certain important minor affairs, some of which he inherited from the preceding administration, and some others which were created in his own time. Of the former class was the task of removing the Indians from the region north of the Gulf of Mexico and east of the Mississippi in order to open this land to white settlers.

When the stream of population ran into the wilderness it followed the Ohio in general, filling the land on each side and down the Mississippi to its mouth. In the North, another stream ran along the lake shores and, carrying the Indians of the old Northwest before it, gradually swept them back into the great plains of the newer Northwest. But the extension of settlements down to the Gulf made impossible such a riddance of the red men of the South. It left surrounded by a zone of white population the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws, together numbering in 1825 as many as fifty-three thousand six hundred souls; and they occupied tribal lands aggregating more than thirty-three million acres. They could not be pushed gradually back as in the Northwest: they must be exterminated or induced by one means or another to remove to the plains, where the problem of contact with the whites would be postponed to a remote generation. The other alternative, peaceful residence among the whites, was not considered possible for any large body of Indians, North or South. The only thing which people thought feasible was to remove them bodily: and as this

was a task for the national government its execution devolved on the President.

Of the four Southwestern tribes the position of the Cherokees was severest, and by following the story of this nation in some detail we may understand the experience of the others. Although they held lands in both Alabama and Tennessee, their chief holding, more than five million acres, was in Georgia, and the land was very fertile. In 1802 Georgia made a general agreement with the United States, one feature of which was that the latter should extinguish the title of the Indian lands within the state's bounds "as early as the same can be peaceably obtained on reasonable terms." At that time the Cherokees and Creeks owned twenty-five million acres in the state. By 1825 the amount had been reduced by several treaties to nine million acres. But the spread of cotton cultivation made their land seem necessary for settlement, and Georgia became eager that the federal government should execute the promise of 1802. It did not appease her to say that the Indian title could not be quieted either "peaceably" or "on reasonable terms," which was all that was promised. She saw herself threatened permanently with the presence of an inferior people, with a government of their own planted solidly within the state limits and claiming immunity from the state laws. Such a situation could not have been contemplated in the formation of the union; and Georgia found much sympathy with her desire to overthrow it, although her methods of dealing with it were neither reasonable nor becoming.

The Cherokees also deserve our sympathy. They were the most civilized of the Southern tribes, they had passed far into the agricultural stage, and removal was sure to bring economic loss and social disorganization. They were specifically protected in their rights by treaties with the United States. There was in the beginning a feeling that an Indian treaty was not fully a

treaty and that it was not, therefore, the supreme law of the land. The supreme court, in a case which arose in this controversy, decided to the contrary;¹ but at that time public opinion was so much excited in Georgia that it was not modified by the decision. In fact, there was something illogical in the idea that an Indian tribe, which had no sovereignty, could make a treaty, usually a mark of sovereignty; and congress recognized it in 1871 when it ordered that in the future *agreements* and not *treaties* be made with the Indians. The Cherokees had good advice in all phases of the controversy. In 1824 they declared in tribal council that they would not sell a foot of land and sent commissioners to Washington to ask that the agreement of 1802 be rescinded. Calhoun, secretary of war, told them in reply that the agreement must be kept and the Indians must remove or give up their tribal authority and be absorbed with the citizens of Georgia. They, on their part, refused to budge, and thus the matter was left to simmer for five years. Meanwhile the state threatened the Indians and denounced the national government, but it did not precipitate civil war by an actual resort to force.

Jackson entered the presidency when this matter was still unsettled. Adams showed a certain amount of sympathy for the constitutional position of a state threatened with division of its power by creating a separate authority within its border; but he was for legal methods and would not tolerate violence on the part of Georgia. Jackson, however, had a Western man's view of the Indian question. He showed it by a determination to appoint a Westerner secretary of war. Eaton, who filled the office, soon gave the Cherokees to understand that the government would not support them in opposition to the laws of Georgia. The Georgians were counting much on just this stand, but in order to be certain they waited for the first annual message.

¹Cherokee Nation vs Georgia, 5 Peters, 17.

It gave them all they required. It not only referred to affairs in Georgia, but it laid down a general Indian policy at variance with that previously followed and in every respect essentially favorable to their purposes.

The old idea, it said, was to civilize the savages; but by purchasing their lands piecemeal we have kept them moving westward so constantly that they could not absorb civilization, and thus the government's object was defeated. A portion of the Southern Indians, however, with a fair prospect of civilization, were in conflict with the states of Georgia and Alabama, which claimed sovereignty respectively over everybody within their limits. Now the constitution guarantees that no new state be can formed within another state without the consent of the latter. Does it not follow that no independent state could be formed within those limits? Would such a thing be tolerated in Maine or in New York? Jackson reported, therefore, that he had told the Indians they would not be supported in their attempt to establish independent governments within state lines and that he advised them to settle beyond the Mississippi. He also recommended that congress set apart an ample region in the Far West to which the Indians might remove and live without conflict with the whites. A few weeks later a bill was introduced and passed by a party vote to set aside a Western region and to appropriate money to aid the removal of those Indians who chose to accept the offer.

This boded ill for the Cherokees. Anticipating the action of congress, their legislative council ordered that all who accepted lands in the West and settled on them should lose tribal membership, that those who sold their property to emigrate should be whipped, and that those who voted to sell a part or all of the tribal possessions should be put to death. It was their reply to the attempt to lure them away.

On the Georgians the effect of Jackson's announced view was

equally decisive. December 22, 1829, the legislature passed a law to extend its authority over the Creeks and Cherokees on June 1, 1830, with provisions to make it difficult for the savages to evade its enforcement. They knew definitely that there was now a President who would not interfere with their plans. Alabama and Mississippi legislatures followed the example of Georgia.

On the appointed day the governor of Georgia proclaimed this law throughout the state. Soon afterward a clash occurred between state officers and the United States troops in Georgia, and the governor asked the President to order the withdrawal of the troops. The request was readily granted. It emphasized Jackson's position that Georgia might exercise sovereignty within her borders.

The Cherokees had friends and advisers among the whites, and all persons opposed to state rights were naturally drawn to their side. They rested their case on the sanctity of their treaties. An Indian tribe, they contended, was a state, a foreign sovereign state, and a treaty with it was a part of the supreme law of the land. When Georgia was about to execute her law of December 22, 1829, they applied to the United States supreme court through their counsel, William Wirt, for an injunction to restrain such action. The case was argued in the January, 1831, term, Georgia ignoring it entirely on the ground of no jurisdiction. Marshall gave the decision, taking up first the question of jurisdiction. By the constitution the United States courts are open to states, citizens of states, foreign states, and citizens of foreign states. Manifestly an Indian tribe to come within the meaning of the constitution, must be either a state as a state within the union, or a foreign state. Marshall held that it was neither, that it occupied a peculiar position and was, in fact, a "domestic dependent nation" with a relation to the United States analogous to that of a ward to

a guardian. A tribe, therefore, could not sue in the United States courts, and the injunction prayed for could not be granted. While the Cherokees lost the case in point, they were pronounced a state—that is, a definite civil power, and this was in opposition to Georgia's purpose to treat them as a mass of individuals over whom she might assert authority. The point would be worth something in resisting the state's pretensions.¹

Meantime the case of Corn Tassel came up. This brave had killed a fellow Cherokee, for which he was tried and condemned in a state court. He appealed to the federal supreme court, alleging no jurisdiction in the Georgia tribunal. Although Wirt hurried to trial the injunction case, which was then pending, Georgia would not stay sentence, and Corn Tassel was executed before the highest court in the land could consider his fate. This utter defiance of the court could not have happened if the executive department had been disposed to protect the court. The case of the Cherokee Nation *vs.* Georgia, just described, lost some of its strength in view of this situation. It was decided a few days after Corn Tassel was hanged.

Another case showed even more plainly the attitude of the President. By the Georgia law whites might not reside with the Indians without state licenses. This was intended to exclude from the tribes those white friends who encouraged them not to sell their lands. Among these people were a number of Northern missionaries, who trusted to the United States law. Eleven of them were arrested for violating the state statute; nine yielded rather than remain in prison, but two, Worcester and Butler, appealed to the United States supreme court. Again Georgia denied jurisdiction and refused to appear, and again Marshall decided against her. In an opinion whose positive tone seems to proceed from a feeling of indignity that he was already ignored, Marshall held that Georgia was

¹ *5 Peters*, 1-30.

wrong at every point. "The Cherokees," he said, "were a nation, they were so recognized by the government and by Georgia herself until recent years, their laws were not to fall before a state, and the United States had the authority to protect them. The sentence of the missionaries was pronounced null.¹ Georgia disregarded the verdict utterly, kept the missionaries in prison more than a year to vindicate her authority, and finally pardoned them.

Jackson's refusal to execute the decree of the court displeased the friends of the missionaries, particularly the Methodists and Friends, and votes were lost in the election of 1832. Van Buren said the defection from this cause was eight thousand in western New York alone.² It produced a more permanent impression on persons interested in constitutional interpretation. The President justified himself on the ground that the executive, coördinate in authority with the judiciary, was not bound to interpret the constitution as the supreme court interpreted it. He could hardly have known his own mind on this point, for he put his defense on more than one ground. To Cass he wrote that it must rest on the principles in *Johnston vs. McIntosh*.³ He said in explanation of his general position: "No feature in the Federal Constitution is more prominent than that the general powers conferred on Congress, can only be enforced, or executed upon the people of the Union. This is a Government of the people."⁴ This position was nearly opposite to that he assumed in reference to nullification within a year. To his friend Coffee he wrote that the difficulty was weakness of the government. "The decision of the Supreme Court," he said in allusion to the case of the missionaries, "has fallen still from the Government, not strong enough to protect them in

¹ 6 Peters, 515-596.

² Van Buren, *Autobiography*, III., 119-120, Van Buren Mss.

³ 8 Wheaton, 543-605.

⁴ Draft in Jackson's handwriting, no date, Jackson Mss.

case of a collision with Georgia.”¹ It seems at this time not to have occurred to him that the government was weak or strong as the executive willed.

The fundamental explanation of Jackson's argument on this matter was his sympathy with Georgia. He believed that the Indians should not remain permanently within the borders of a state. Of removal as a fact Van Buren observes: "That great work was emphatically the fruit of his own exertions. It was his judgment, his experience, his indomitable vigor and unrelenting activity that secured success. There was no measure in the whole course of his administration of which he was more exclusively the author than this." It was a policy conceived in a spirit of humanity. February 22, 1831, it was formulated in a special message to congress.² A real friend of the Indians, said he, would urge them to remove. If they remained within state limits there would ever be trouble, and liberal aid ought to be given them in settling new homes. No one regretted the hardships incidental to the process more than he; but they were ills which must be endured.

The conflict with the supreme court brought him into opposition to Chief Justice Marshall. A popular tradition, first printed so far as I know by Horace Greeley, represented Jackson as saying after the decision in the case of the missionaries: "John Marshall has made his decision. Now let him enforce it."³ It is not sure that these words were actually uttered, but it is certain from Jackson's views and temperament that they might have been spoken. His antipathy for the chief justice was so strong that in 1835 he refused to attend a memorial meeting in his honor. He avowed high appreciation of Marshall's "learning, talents, and patriotism," but as one who did not agree with the ideas of constitutional law held by the deceased

¹April 7, 1832, copy in Dyas Collection, Library of Congress.

²Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 536.

³Greeley, *The American Conflict*, I., 106.

jurist he could not unite in honoring him with those who did so agree.¹

Jackson's refusal to execute the judgment of the supreme court left the Cherokees at the mercy of Georgia. They realized that they must lose in the long run, and a party of them, led by John Ringe, advocated removal, while another, led by John Ross, were for staying in Georgia. In 1835 the former party agreed to the cession of the remaining tribal lands to the United States for five million dollars and land beyond the Mississippi. The Ross faction held out until 1838, when United States troops under General Scott forcibly expelled them. They went to Indian Territory, created by a law of 1834, when they received lands near those of the Creeks, Chickasaws, and Choctaws, who had before that time accepted the terms of the government. These other tribes had all looked to the Cherokee case for an intimation of what would be done and made terms accordingly.²

The payment of the public debt was another measure which appealed to Jackson's political sense. Scrupulous in paying his own obligations, he thought it equally desirable that the government should owe nothing. His first message held out hope of the early accomplishment of his desire — privately, he thought it might be done within his first term of office. The revenues from imports and land sales were large and yielded a yearly surplus which was used for this purpose. In 1834 the last of the debt was discharged. His message to congress in that year expressed his gratification, but he added the caution that the situation be not made the excuse for future extravagance.

Extravagance was, in fact, a menace, as it ever is when there is a large surplus. Plans were made by various interests looking to the dissipation of the surplus. Internal improve-

¹Jackson to Chandler and Williams, September 18, 1835, Jackson Mss.

²For important documents on the controversy with Georgia, see Ames, *State Documents on Federal Relations* 113-132.

ments would have been a ready preventive of government hoarding, but the Maysville veto had too well disposed of them to warrant the hope that they could be carried. The most probable course was one suggested from several sources, and very popular in the West, for distributing the surplus among the states after the debt was paid. The anti-tariff men declared that it was supported by the tariff party, lest an accumulating surplus should lead men to think that the tariff ought to be reduced.

Early in his presidency Jackson believed in distributing the surplus among the states according to representation in congress. He said as much in the first draft of his inaugural address and he repeated it in his first annual message. If it could not legally be done, he said, it would be wise to amend the constitution so as to allow it; and he made it a point against Calhoun that he opposed distributing the surplus. Jackson's view was in opposition to the state rights school, and as this group came into prominence in his party he veered away from distribution. There was as little reason that he should favor it as that he should support internal improvements, and he must have seen it. In his second annual message he returned to the subject as a means of providing internal improvements. The surplus, he said, should be given to the states according to representation in congress; for they could best assign it to the ends contemplated. By the time he wrote the third message his opinion had undergone a change. He then recommended that the tariff be so adjusted that after the debt was paid no more money should be taken from the people than was necessary for the expenses of the government.¹

The ground thus left unoccupied was seized upon by Clay — not at first through design on his part, but through the manipulation of his enemies. By a trick he was forced in 1832 to take

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II., 451, 514, 556.

a stand on the land question.¹ After deliberating he moved to distribute among the states the proceeds of the sale of public lands. He took pains to say that it was unconstitutional to distribute the revenue, but that the proceeds of land sales was another matter. The bill got through the senate, to fail in the house. Clay brought it forward again in December, 1832. It was then passed and went to Jackson in the last days of the congress. He applied the "pocket veto" and sent congress when it convened in the following December his reasons therefor. Clay argued that the lands were a guarantee for the payment of the national debt, and that inasmuch as this was about paid the further proceeds should be distributed. Jackson denied the first proposition, held that no distinction was to be made as to the source of revenue, and objected to the method of distribution provided in the bill. He also found it at variance with the doctrine of the Maysville veto, which of itself was enough to insure rejection. In the veto Jackson took occasion to say, as he said in the message of 1832, that the proper way to deal with a surplus from the sale of the lands was to reduce the price to or near the expense of sales.² In this he put himself in line with the general Western land policy, dear to the heart of Benton and of many another Jackson leader from the newer states.

But the strongest argument against approving the bill was its tendency to make the states look to the federal government for benefactions. The object of the bill was to distribute not the surplus of the land sales, but all the proceeds from such sales, while the expenses of the land offices were made a charge on the general revenue. This was a bill to create a surplus and once adopted might lead to vast extravagances of a similar nature. "It appears to me," said Jackson, "that a more direct

¹Sargent, *Public Men and Events*, I., 205-208.

²Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, III., 56-69.

road to consolidation can not be devised. Money is power, and in the Government which pays all the public officers of the states will all political power be substantially concentrated. . . . However willing I might be that any unavoidable surplus in the Treasury should be returned to the people through their State governments, I cannot assent to the principle that a surplus may be created for the purpose of distribution." Many of Clay's policies seem to have been adopted without definite conviction of their soundness. In seeking an exit from a perilous position he had hit upon a measure which he thought very popular; but most thinking people must have found it an unhealthy symptom of a feverish state of public morals. There was abroad a strong desire for assistance from the central government. Clay was willing to stimulate and profit by it politically: Jackson did not hesitate to attack it and to seek to check it.

The veto of 1833 did not dispose of the question. The actual accumulation of a surplus strengthened the demand for distribution. By 1836 the surplus was more than thirty millions, and the abstraction of so much money from business channels was an economic evil. Clay, therefore, returned to his plan for relief, which he vainly sought to get adopted in the session of 1833-1834. Another bill introduced late in 1835 was much like that which Jackson vetoed in 1833. It proposed to distribute the net proceeds of the land sales during the years 1833 to 1837 inclusive. Fifteen per cent. of the sales in the new states was to go to those states and the remainder was to be divided in proportion to federal population, the new states sharing in this allotment also. Clay put the net amount for 1833-1835 at twenty-one million. He pushed the bill with his usual skill and early in May it passed the senate.

But other plans were formed. In the house a bill was now introduced to distribute the surplus from whatever source. It was called "An act to regulate the deposits of the public

money." Some of its sections, when it took final shape, provided more careful regulations for the banks of deposits. Others provided that the surplus funds of the government above five million dollars should be deposited with the states, according to federal population. It soon became known in congress that Jackson would approve this bill but would veto Clay's. Administration men were evidently alarmed at the trend of opinion for distribution and took this means of meeting it. They were pleased that the President would not longer resist what they considered the inevitable and carried the bill through the house with enthusiasm by a vote of 155 to 38. In the senate it was also passed, and Jackson approved it June 23, 1836. It provided that all the money in the treasury January 1, 1837, above five million dollars, should be deposited with the states in four equal payments on the first days of January, April, July, and October. In return the states were to give negotiable certificates of deposit, without interest until negotiated, payable to the secretary of the treasury on demand. This preserved the form of a true deposit, by which many who voted for it made themselves believe the law constitutional. Jackson himself in his last annual message spoke as though he believed this, and he deprecated the habit of speaking of the distribution as though it were a loan. But practical men thought the payments would never be demanded.

Jackson himself had doubts about the correctness of his approval and turned to Taney, then his mentor in constitutional matters. The chief justice replied that the precedent was bad; for if congress might collect money to deposit with the states it might do anything; that the money could not practically be recovered from the states; and that most democrats regretted the passage of the bill. But he added that he thought Jackson did well to approve it under the circumstances.¹ Probably

¹Taney to Jackson, June 20, 1836, Jackson Mss.

the impelling cause of approval was the necessity of helping Van Buren in the campaign then in progress.

By December, when congress met, Jackson's ideas were more definite; and he spoke severely in his annual message of the law just enacted. Adverting to the fact that the deposits were real deposits and not to be considered as gifts, he opened the whole discussion again. He pointed out with a clearness that suggests the pen of Taney the evils likely to come from the policy inaugurated, and he urged that the best way of preventing them was to collect smaller taxes. "To require the people," he said, "to pay taxes to the Government merely that they may be paid back again is sporting with the substantial interests of the country." The paragraphs on the subject closed with a strong argument for economy and self-control in the government's financial policy.¹ Events about to come reinforced it, and, with the panic of 1837 at hand, the further distribution of the surplus ceased to be a problem for the statesman.

In the same message Jackson discussed the state of the currency. He came out for specie as the money of the constitution, and spoke at length of the bank-note system then in use and much abused. He realized the danger to the country from the issue of notes in large excess of good business principles and he brought out in more than legitimate relief the bearing of the point on the bank controversy.

This warning was well timed; for the accumulation of the large surplus in the deposit banks had led to the overissue of their notes. With it went a wave of speculation which called out a vast amount of paper from banks whose soundness was questionable. This was especially true in the West, where speculation, chiefly in land, was most prevalent. So evident was it that the currency was bad that Jackson issued, July 11, 1836, through the secretary of the treasury, the celebrated

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, III., 239-246.

Specie Circular, by which lands must be paid for in specie. The occasion for this order was evident.

In the West a distinct kind of currency had become abundant known as "land-office money." This was the notes of the deposit banks and those of such other banks as the deposit banks would receive. They were legally receivable for lands and were paid in for that purpose at the land offices, to be deposited in the banks, where they were lent to land speculators, who again paid them in for lands. The ease with which this could be done stimulated a great amount of speculation. Land sales before 1834 were less than four million dollars a year; in 1835 they were nearly fifteen millions, and in 1836 more than twenty-four millions. For these large sales the government had chiefly the credits of the banks in which the funds were deposited, and the soundness of those banks was jeopardized by their large loans to the speculators. Nor did the lands sold represent settlements. They were largely held by speculators, great and small, and the actual settlers must buy of them at an advance or take inferior lands or lands remote from the zone of settlement. The situation was altogether unhealthy both from a fiscal, a business, and an agrarian standpoint; and Jackson's determination to check it before worse evils followed was a wise move. The Specie Circular caused distress among the speculators, it started a specie movement toward the West, and it helped to accentuate the panicky trend of 1837; but it was a healthy antidote to the situation of 1836 and enabled business men to take some precautions against danger before the storm actually burst. Jackson in the annual message of 1836 summed up its benefits as follows:

It checked the career of the Western banks and gave them additional strength in anticipation of the pressure which has since pervaded our Eastern as well as the European commercial

cities. By preventing the extension of the credit system it measurably cut off the means of speculation and retarded its progress in monopolizing the most valuable of the public lands. It has tended to save the new states from a non-resident proprietorship, one of the greatest obstacles to the advancement of a new country and the prosperity of an old one.

The Specie Circular was by Jackson's own admission inspired chiefly by the desire to restrain the land speculators. Van Buren justly said the people would approve it on this account. In this respect it was like most of his other measures relating to business interests. His policies toward the bank, the currency, the sale of land, internal improvements, and the distribution of the surplus had this thing in common: they were all aimed at what he considered an abuse of privilege. While each of these measures had its specific economic significance, each had, also, a common relation to the anti-monopolistic spirit which came as a reaction against the rapid growth of the speculative class. In all these matters he voiced the people's cry against their own exploitation. Crude as some of his ideas were, they were founded on some of the most permanent principles of equality. It cannot be doubted that he checked tendencies essentially dangerous in the day of over-confidence, when men forgot ancient principles and looked mostly to the present advantage. He espoused the interest, as he thought, of the average man, and the average man approved it.

CHAPTER XXXII

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

AT THIS point we turn from Jackson's conflicts and problems and consider the man himself. His enemies hated him and rarely saw his good qualities; his friends loved him and reluctantly admitted his failings; and in a sense each was right. Some of the good things he did are excellent and some of the bad things are wretched. His puzzling personality defies clear analysis, but we must admit that he was a remarkable man. He lacked much through the want of an education, and he acquired much through apparent accident, but it was only his strong character which turned deficiency and opportunity alike to his purpose and made his will the strongest influence in his country in his time.

The secret of his power was his adjustment to the period in which he lived. Other men excelled him in experience, wisdom, and balanced judgment; but the American democrats of the day admired neither of these qualities. They honored courage, strength, and directness. They could tolerate ignorance but not hesitancy. Jackson was the best embodiment of their desires from the beginning of the national government to his own day.

Jackson accepted democracy with relentless logic. Some others believed that wise leaders could best determine the policies of government, but he more than any one else of his day threw the task of judging upon the common man. And this he did without cant and in entire sincerity. No passionate dreamer of the past was more willing than he to test his principles to

the uttermost. "You know I never despair," he said; "I have confidence in the virtue and good sense of the people. God is just, and while we act faithfully to the Constitution, he will smile upon and prosper our exertions."¹

Mere military glory will not explain his hold on the nation. It undoubtedly had much to do with his introduction into national politics, but it soon gave place to a popularity resting on other qualities. In fact, his peculiar character shone behind his military fame and recommended him to the people. They liked his promptness in invading Florida in 1818 and his abrupt bridling of the dallying Callava in 1821 as much as his victory at New Orleans. Other generals won victories in the war, but they did not become political forces through them. To the people the old government seemed weak and unequal, and Jackson, the man who solved difficulties, was elected to reform it. When the process of reform began his capacity as a political leader showed itself. Probably he could have been reelected in 1832 independently of his war record.

Much has been said about his honesty. The historical critic and the moralist know this for a common virtue. Most of Jackson's contemporaries were as honest as he, but he excelled them in candor, which is frequently pronounced honesty. He was apt to speak his mind clearly, although he could on occasion, as has been seen, be as diplomatic as a delicate case demanded. Van Buren said in apparent sincerity that he believed "an honester or in any sense a better man was never placed at the head of the Government."²

Many citations and incidents in the preceding pages witness Jackson's lack of restraint and fair judgment. They seem to suggest habitual errors of mind; but we are assured that such was not the case. Even Calhoun, in the bitterness of the final

¹Jackson to Van Buren, November 1, 1830, Van Buren Mss.

²Van Buren to John Randolph, April 13, 1831, Van Buren Mss.

quarrel, admitted that in ordinary matters and when not irritated by some unusual thing he was fair and reasonable. The explosions of anger for which he was noted were incident to a tense natural temperament; and they were apt to come when he was off his guard. In dangers which were anticipated he was extremely cool. Thus at New Orleans he broke into violent rage when he saw the column on the west bank falling back, although when the lines were assailed two hours earlier he was complete master of himself. In the long struggles against his political enemies he was never surprised into some rash explosion, although many efforts were made by opponents to lead him into such a situation. "He was," says Van Buren, "in times of peculiar difficulty and danger, calm and equable in his carriage and always master of his passions."¹

But Van Buren would not claim that he was fair toward an opponent. "The conciliation of individuals," he said, "formed the smallest, perhaps too small a part of his policy. His strength lay with the masses, and he knew it. He first, and at last in all public questions, always tried to be right, and when he felt that he was so he apprehended little, sometimes too little, from the opposition of prominent and powerful men, and it must now be admitted that he seldom overestimated the strength he derived from the confidence and favor of the people."²

In England Van Buren came into contact with the Duke of Wellington, then a leader of the conservatives there; and he made the following comparison between the Duke and Jackson:

There were many points in which he and General Jackson resembled each other. In moral and physical courage, in indifference to personal consequences, and in promptness of action there was little if any difference in their characters. The Duke was better educated and had received the instruction of

¹*Autobiography*, V., 84, Van Buren Mss.

²*Ibid.*, III., 52.

experience upon a larger scale, but the General in native intellect had, I think, been more richly endowed.¹

But there was a marked dissimilarity which Van Buren overlooked. The Englishman was cautious, steady, and persistent; the American was aggressive, incautious, and disposed to throw all his strength into a frontal attack. Wellington was a conservative by nature, Jackson was a radical; Wellington in politics led the party of privilege, Jackson led the party of equality. Neither could have performed the task of the other.

When Jackson became President it was expected that he would fall under the influence of favorites. His inexperience in national affairs made it essential that he should take advice freely, and he himself was conscious of it. But he was never a tool. In all his important measures he was the dominant figure. The Maysville veto was, perhaps, the affair in which another had most part, but even here Van Buren, who suggested the measure, was careful to base it on Jackson's known opposition to the invasion of state rights and to the exploitation of the public treasury by private parties. He approached the matter most cautiously and used his best tact to conceal his purpose.

Other Presidents were dependent on advice, but they usually consulted their cabinet. Jackson, when a general, rarely held military councils; when President he rarely held cabinet meetings. A formal cabinet decision limited him; he preferred to consult whom he wished, informally and without responsibility. Out of such conditions grew the "Kitchen Cabinet." This group did not control him outright; all its members approached him with great caution, and they accomplished their ends only by tact and insinuating appeals to his feelings.

If his policies were his own his documents were usually prepared by others. He was not a master of writing or argumen-

¹*Autobiography*, IV., 167, Van Buren Mss.

tation, but he knew well what he would fight for. His private letters show crude reasoning to support objects which are dictated by common sense. His best documents are his military proclamations, where there is room for the play of such strong feelings as courage, endurance, and loyalty — qualities in which he was at his best.

His lack of political knowledge made him in cases where knowledge was essential a bad judge of men. In 1834 he expressed a desire to appoint Cuthbert, of Georgia, to the supreme bench, upon which Van Buren observed that there were two Cuthberts in Georgia, Alfred, of whom he had never heard that he was a lawyer, and John, whom he did not think equal to the position.¹ Jackson took the rebuke in good spirit, and appointed another man.

Van Buren's anxiety to escape blame for participating in the removal of the deposits has been alluded to;² but we are hardly prepared for the following audacious utterance made the day after the order to remove went into effect:

You will see by the inclosed, that the opposition have commenced the game I anticipated. They have found by experience that their abuse of you is labour lost, and they conclude wisely that if they could succeed in shifting the Bank question from your shoulders to mine, they would be better able to serve the Mammon than they are at present. Now, although I cannot grumble at the service they are rendering me with the people, by identifying me with you in this matter, it will not do for us to expose the great measure to prejudice by doing anything that would tend in the slightest degree to withdraw from it the protection of your name.³

The object of this peculiarly insidious flattery probably never

¹Jackson to Van Buren, October 27th; Van Buren to Jackson, November 5, 1834, Van Buren Mss.

²See above, II., 630-642.

³Van Buren to Jackson, October 2, 1835, Van Buren Mss.

suspected its nature. To the faults of a friend he was singularly blind.

Of associates other than Van Buren, Lewis seems to have had influence chiefly in personal affairs. He was at home in the Eaton intrigue, the exclusion of Calhoun, and the nomination of Van Buren in 1832. He lived in the President's house and encouraged the impression that he held the key to his favor. He was able by this means to exert a wide influence among the office-seekers. Jackson used him freely in matters high and low. At one time he wants him to stay in Washington to keep an eye on the situation during the President's absence: at another he gives him all kinds of minor commissions, as writing papers and selling cotton.¹ Kendall had more to do with policies, but his influence came comparatively late. He was powerful in the bank controversy, a strong supporter of Jackson's anti-bank views, and after that war was won his influence survived in general matters. Blair, who came into touch with the administration in 1830, became after a while a warm personal associate; but he was not a man of creative power. He loved Jackson and fought faithfully for him, but the many letters which passed between them show no evidence that he sought to modify the President's political life.

But Blair gave a rich friendship. He had the homely virtues of the West. His home on Pennsylvania Avenue opposite the President's house was presided over by a wife who to a larger culture added the reliable virtues of Mrs. Jackson. It was a haven of comfort to the tired spirit and body of the harassed and pain-racked Jackson, and he made touching references to it as long as he lived. To Mrs. Blair on the eve of his departure from Washington he wrote the following characteristic words:

I cannot leave this city without presenting you my grateful

¹Illustrations are found in the Ford Mss. See calendar in *Bulletin of New York Public Library*, IV., 295-302.

thanks for the great kindness you have extended to me and my family whilst here. When sick you visited us and extended to me and our dear little ones all comforts within your power. We all part with you and your dear husband and amiable family with sincere regret; but I trust in a kind providence that I may reach home and be spared until I have the pleasure of seeing you and Mr. Blair and your dear Eliza at the Hermitage. You will receive a good welcome. I beg you to accept as a memento of my regard a heifer raised by me since my second election. She will bring you in mind of my fondness for good milk, and how I was gratified in this fondness from your liberal hands.¹

If he had the failings of suspiciousness, narrowness, and vindictiveness, he had also the calmer virtues of domesticity and personal honor. He was peculiarly gentle with the weak. Women were pleased with his protecting chivalry. They admired his grave dignity and warm emotions. For children he had a tender heart, and the cry of an infant aroused his warm sympathy. His letters contain many expressions of pride in the developments of the children of his adopted son and of distress over their suffering. Into his relations with his relatives storms rarely entered. To them he was the clan leader and defender.

With true Southern feeling he took every woman seriously. In 1833 a New Haven spinster appealed to Van Buren to introduce her to Jackson, so that she might win his affection and become his wife. Her letter was forwarded to Jackson, who wrote in the finest possible strain, and with his own hand: "Whatever may be her virtues, I could make but one answer to any partiality they could form for me, and that is, my heart is in the grave of my dear departed wife, from which sacred spot no living being can recall it. In the cultivation of the sentiments of friendship, which are perhaps rendered more active by the loss I have sustained, I trust I shall always be able to produce

¹March 6, 1837, Jackson Mss.

suitable returns for the favor of my acquaintances; and if therefore I ever meet this lady I shall hope to satisfy her that I appreciate as I ought her kindness, tho' I cannot for a moment entertain the proposition it has led her to make."¹

Much of the affection of his old age centred in the family and person of his adopted son, a man whose business failures brought much sorrow. For the son's wife, Sarah York Jackson, the father had a strong affection which was well deserved by her calm and faithful care of his old age. His fatherly instinct was marked. It appears with many other virtues, in the following letter to Andrew Jackson, Jr., written from Washington, March 9, 1834, after paying many of the young man's debts:

My dear son, I recd yesterday your letter of the 16th ultimo, and have read with attention, and am more than pleased that you have taken a just view of that fatherly advice I have been constantly pressing upon you, believing as I do, that unless you adopt them you cannot possibly get well thro life and provide for an increasing family which it is now your duty to do, and have the means of giving them such education as your duty to them as a parent requires, and their standing in society, merits.

My dear son, It is enough for me that you acknowledge your error, it is the error of youth and inexperience, and my son I fully forgive them. You have my advice, it is that of a tender and affectionate father given to you for your benefit and that of your dear and amiable family, and I pray you to adhere to it in all respects and it will give peace and plenty thro life and that of your amiable Sarah and her dear little ones. Keep clear of Banks and indebtedness, and you live a freeman, and die in independence and leave your family so.

Before this reaches you, you will have received my letter enclosing Mr. Hubbs note, cancelled; and as soon as you furnish me with the full amount of the debts due by the farm, with any you may have contracted in Tennessee, and the contract with Mr. Hill for the land purchased, I will, if my means are

¹Van Buren to Jackson, July 22nd; Jackson to Van Buren, July 25, 1833; Van Buren Mss.

equal to the object, free you from debt and the farm, when the farm with the aid of your own industry and economy must support us, and after I am gone, you and your family. Hence it is, and was, that I was and am so solicitous to be furnished with the full information on all the points required of you. Those who do not settle all their accounts at the end of the year, cannot know what means he really possesses, for the next; and remember, my son, that honesty and justice to all men require that we should always live within our own means, and not on those of others, when it may be, that those to whom we are indebted are relying on what we owe them, for their own support. Therefore it is unjust to live on any but our own means honestly and justly acquired. Follow this rule and a wise and just providence will smile upon your honest endeavours, and surround you with plenty, so long as you deserve it by your just and charitable conduct to all others.¹

In 1829 many persons thought that a democratic President would rob the office of its dignity. Their fears were only partially realized; for although the new party gave a touch of crudeness to life in Washington generally, the manners of the democratic President on formal occasions were all that could be desired. Francis Lieber, who visited him, spoke admiringly of his "noble, expressive countenance," and said: "He has the appearance of a venerable old man, his features by no means plain; on the contrary, he made the best impression on me."

Tyrone Power, the actor, gives this account:

As viewed on horseback, the General is a fine, soldierly, well-preserved old gentleman, with a pale, wrinkled countenance, and a keen clear eye, restless and searching. His seat is an uncommonly good one, his hand apparently light, and his carriage easy and horseman-like; circumstances though trifling in themselves, not so general here as to escape observation. . . . Both the wife and sister of an English officer of high rank,

¹Jackson Mss.

²Perry, *Life of Lieber*, 92, 93.

themselves women of remarkable refinement of mind and manners, observed to me, in speaking of the President, that they had seldom met a person possessed of more native courtesy, or a more dignified deportment.¹

A more critical and less friendly observer was Nathaniel Sargent, who said: "In any promiscuous assembly of a thousand men he would have been pointed out above all the others as a man 'born to command,' and who would, in any dangerous emergency, be at once placed in command. Ordinarily, he had the peculiar, rough, independent, free and easy ways of the backwoodsman; but at the same time he had, whenever occasion required, and especially when in the society of ladies, very urbane and graceful manners."²

John Fairfield, congressman from Maine, said of him: "He is a warm-hearted, honest old man as ever lived, and possesses talents too of the first order, notwithstanding what many of our Northern folk think of him. He talks about all matters freely and fearlessly without any disguise, and in a straightforward honesty and simplicity of style and manner which you would expect from what I have before said of him. I wish some of our good folks North could hear him talk upon a subject in which he is interested, say the French question, which he talked about on Monday evening. I think their opinions would undergo a change."³

Life in the President's house now lost something of the good form of the Virginia régime, but it lost nothing of the air of domesticity. Throughout most of the two administrations the household was directed by Mrs. A. J. Donelson, a woman of firm and refined character whom the people of Washington greatly respected. Her husband, a private secretary of more

¹Power, *Impressions of America* (London), 1836, I., 279, 281.

²Sargent, *Public Men and Events*, I., 35, 246.

³John Fairfield to his wife, December 9, 1835; Fairfield Mss. in the possession of Miss Martha Fairfield, Saco, Me.

than ordinary ability, was related to Mrs. Jackson. Their presence in the White House gave something of the "Hermitage" feeling to the place. Politicians came and went as freely in office hours as in any exterior public office in the city. Intimates like Van Buren, Eaton, and Blair dropped in at any time, before breakfast, or in the evening, as inclination prompted; and the industrious Lewis for a large part of the administrations lived in the house. Ordinarily the President and his family made one group in the evenings. If a cabinet member, or other official, appeared to talk about public business, he read his documents or otherwise consulted with Jackson in one part of the room, the ladies sewing or chatting and the children playing meanwhile in another part.¹

The levees were as republican as Jefferson could wish. George Bancroft thus describes one he attended in 1831:

The old man stood in the centre of a little circle, about large enough for a cotillion, and shook hands with everybody that offered. The number of ladies who attended was small; nor were they brilliant. But to compensate for it there was a throng of apprentices, boys of all ages, men not civilized enough to walk about the room with their hats off; the vilest promiscuous medley that ever was congregated in a decent house; many of the lowest gathering round the doors, pouncing with avidity upon the wine and refreshments, tearing the cake with the ravenous keenness of intense hunger; starvelings, and fellows with dirty faces and dirty manners; all the refuse that Washington could turn forth from its workshops and stables. In one part of the room it became necessary to use a rattan.²

Bancroft was ever a precise gentleman and in his own day in the capital his entertainments were models of propriety, but we cannot doubt that the people at the levee he attended were absolutely rude. Fortunately he was at a select reception and his

¹For Van Buren's praise of Jackson's love of family, see *Autobiography*, IV., 82, Van Buren Mss.

²Howe, *Life of Bancroft*, I., 196.

impressions of it were better. "The old gentleman," he said, "received us as civilly as any private individual could have done; he had me introduced to all the ladies of the family, and such was the perfect ease and good breeding that prevailed there, they talked to me as though I had been an acquaintance of ten years' standing. . . . I received a very favorable impression of the President's personal character; I gave him credit for great firmness in his attachments, for sincere kindness of heart, for a great deal of philanthropy and genuine good feeling; but touching his qualifications for President, avast there — Sparta hath many a wiser than he."

Of a reception at the President's, December 24, 1835, we have this description: More than 300 guests were invited, and there was on this evening much scurrying of the innumerable hacks on Pennsylvania Avenue to take guests to the mansion. Entering the door we leave our wraps, cross a large empty room, pass another door to a room in which Jackson meets his guests. He receives his company by shaking hands with each, which is done in a very kind, courteous and gentlemanly manner, and sometimes with friendly warmth, according to the personage." We may loiter in this room if we will, but we probably pass on to the "blue room," whose light is so trying to the complexion that few ladies will linger a moment in it. Beyond that is the brilliantly lighted "east room," in which the guests promenade, and it fills with people intermingling informally, a lively "scene of bowing, talking, laughing, ogling, squinting, squeezing, etc." In the room are many of the notables of the city, congressmen with their wives, senators, army and naval officers with swords and uniforms, and persons of distinction. The ladies are handsome, or not, as nature made them, but they are uniformly dressed with elegance, mostly in satin gowns with here and there a mantle of rich silk and velvet. Ices, jellies, wine, and lemonade are passed continually among the guests; and at eleven o'clock

supper is served. Into a large dining-room enter the guests. A table, or counter, surrounds the space set so as to allow the company to sit outside of its perimeter, next the wall. Within this square is a smaller table from which food and drink are served. Of each sort there is an abundance. "I can't describe this supper," says our informant; "I am not capable of it. I can only say it surpassed everything of the kind I ever saw before, and that we had *everything*. This party could not have cost the President much short of \$1,500."¹

Jackson's dinners were generous and in good form. Gen. Robert Patterson, of Philadelphia, gives us this impression of one he attended: "At 4 o'clock, we went to the President's. The party was small, comprising only the General's family and ourselves. The dinner was very neat and served in excellent taste, while the wines were of the choicest qualities. The President himself dined on the simplest fare; bread, milk and vegetables. After dinner took a walk through the grounds about the 'White House' which are laid out with much neatness and order, and filled with a number of shrubs and flowers."²

The following items from his personal accounts of 1834 will show how amply his table was spread: October 1st, he had twelve pounds of veal, forty-nine of beef, and nineteen cents' worth of hog's fat. October 2nd, he had eight pounds of mutton, forty pounds of beef, and twenty-five cents' worth of sausages. October 3rd, it was twenty-two pounds of mutton and twenty pounds of beef. October 4th, he had six pounds of sweetbreads, sixteen pounds of mutton, three pounds of lard, \$1.10 worth of beef, and twenty-five cents' worth of veal. For drink he was charged on October 13th, with one barrel of ale and half a barrel of beer, and on the 31st, with another barrel of ale. October 1st, he bought three gallons of brandy, two gallons of Holland gin,

¹John Fairfield to his wife, December 25, 1835, from the Fairfield Mss. in the possession of Miss Martha Fairfield, Saco, Me.

²General Patterson's diary, in possession of Mr. Lindsay Patterson, Winston-Salem, N. C.

and one gallon of Jamaica spirits. October 13th, he bought three bottles of Chateau Margeaux, a like quantity of Chateau Lafitte, and a dozen bottles of London porter. October 22nd, he had two gallons each of brandy, Jamaica spirits, and Holland gin.¹

Some idea of the furnishing of the President's House under Jackson may be had from an inventory made March 24, 1825. The contents of each room appear in faithful description and are here reproduced because I know of no other such reliable account. In the entrance hall were four mahogany settees, two marble consul tables, two elegant brass fenders, one oilcloth carpet, one thermometer and barometer, and one "lamp with branches wants repair." In the large levee room were four large mahogany sofas and twenty-four large mahogany arm-chairs — all "unfinished," — eight pine tables, one door screen, one paper screen partition, one mahogany map-stand, one "common" wash-stand, basin and ewer, one pine clothes-press, and a book case in three sections. In the "Elliptical Drawing Room" were one "large glass and gilt chandelier, elegant," two gilt brown mirrors, one gilt consul table, marble top, two china vases, one elegant gilt French mantel clock, four bronze and gilt candelabras with eagle heads, pair of bronze and gilt andirons, two sofas — gilt and satin — with twenty-four chairs, four settees and five footstools to match a large French carpet, double silk window curtains with gilt-eagle cornices and six small curtain pins, and with two fire screens in gilt and satin, two bronze candlesticks, and shovel and tongs. Beside the two rooms mentioned, there were on the first floor a "Yellow Drawing Room," a "Green Drawing Room," large and small dining-rooms, a china closet, a pantry, and a porter's room. There were a "first service" of two hundred and seventy pieces of French china, a "second service, dessert," of 157 pieces of crim-

¹Jackson Mss.

son and gilt china, a service of white and gilt china of 232 pieces, a white and gilt French china tea service containing 156 pieces, a blue china dinner service of 66 pieces. The solid silver consisted of 28 dishes in three sizes, one coffee and two teapots, one urn, two large tureens with buckskin cases, one sugar dish, eight castor rolls, one set of castors, five nut crackers, with spoons, forks, fish knives, etc. Among these was one large chest with 167 pieces, most of which were solid silver. Another case had 150 pieces of French plate, and there was a French gilt dessert set of 140 pieces. In the basement were the kitchens, the steward's rooms, the servants' hall, servants' rooms with the scantiest furniture, this being a sample: "No. 1, one cot, worn out, one mattress, worn out, one short bench." On the second floor were the family sleeping quarters with six furnished bedrooms, and private drawing and dressing rooms. No mention is made of bath rooms, and the illumination of the house was by candles and lamps.¹

Jackson was never a careful spender, and through this trait as well as by an abundant hospitality he used all his presidential salary, \$25,000 a year. When he left Washington he was poorer than he entered it. "I returned," he said, "with barely ninety dollars in my pockets, Beacon for my family and corn and oats for the stock to buy, the new roof on my house just rebuilt leaking and to be repaired. I carried \$5,000 when I went to Washington: it took of my cotton crop \$2,250, with my salary, to bring me home. The burning of my house and furniture has left me poor."² The "Hermitage" with its contents was burned in 1834.³ He ordered it rebuilt, according to the old plans. His receipts from his farm during his absence were very small.

As his administration progressed Jackson became deeply

¹See inventory in the House of Representatives Library, of Congress.

²See endorsement on Rev. A. D. Campbell to Jackson, March 17, 1837, Jackson Mss.

³Jackson to Van Buren, October 27, 1834, Van Buren Mss.

engrossed in its controversies. Visitors were liable to have from him hot outbursts of wrath against Biddle, Clay, or Calhoun. His particular friends learned to ignore such displays, but other persons found them disagreeable. A caller who alluded to contemporary politics might have a harangue on the decay of liberty.¹ It soon dawned on the public that the President was feeling the effects of the strain on him. Victor as he was, sorrow pressed him down, and he was much alone. Defiantly he watched his beaten foes, who dared not renew the battle as long as he was in power.

The two terms of the presidency brought him continued ill health. Chronic indigestion made it necessary to diet strictly, and but for an iron will he could hardly have lived through the period. Beside this, he suffered continually from the wounds he received in the Benton and Dickinson duels. For his most distressing attacks his favorite remedy was bleeding, and he insisted on using it even when he could ill afford the weakening effects. The winter of 1832-33 was very trying; and in the following spring and summer its difficulties were increased by the death of Overton and Coffee, two of his oldest and best loved friends. More than this, the period saw the culmination of the nullification movement and the opening of the controversy over the removal of the deposits. Together they brought great depression. "I want relaxation from business, and rest," he said, "but where can I get rest? I fear not on this earth."² Of Coffee's death he said: "I mourn his loss with the feelings of David for his son [*sic*] Jonathan. It is useless to mourn. He is gone the way of all the earth and I will soon follow him. Peace to his manes."³

It was May 6th of this year that Robert B. Randolph, a lieutenant of the navy, discharged for irregularities in his ac-

¹Sargent, *Public Men and Events*, II., 21; Howe, *Life of Bancroft*, I., 193.

²Jackson to Van Buren, January 6, 1833, Van Buren Mss.

³*Ibid* to *ibid*, July 24, 1833, Van Buren Mss.

counts, assaulted Jackson in the cabin of a steamboat at the Alexandria dock. Randolph felt aggrieved for some words in the President's letter approving the dismissal. He found the object of his wrath seated at a table; and when Jackson, who did not know him, rose, Randolph thrust out his hand with the intention, as he later asserted, of pulling the President's nose. Bystanders interfered and bore the irate lieutenant to the shore. Newspapers of both parties deplored the affair. Jackson saw in it a plot to humiliate him and believed that Duff Green was privy to it.¹ The affair brought from him an outburst of his old-time indignation which he expressed in the following words to Van Buren:

If this had been done [*i. e.*, if he had been told that Randolph approached], I would have been prepared and upon my feet, when he never would have moved with life from his tracks he stood in. Still more do I regret that when I got to my feet, and extricated from the bunks, and tables, that my friends interposed, closed the passage to the door, and held me, until I was obliged to tell them if they did not open a passage I would open it with my cane. In the meantime, the villain, surrounded by his friends, had got out of the boat, crying they were carrying him to the civil authority. Thus again I was halted at the warf. Solomon says, "there's a time for all things under the sun," and if the dastard will only present himself to me, I will freely pardon him, after the interview, for every act or thing done to me, or he may thereafter do to me.²

This interview, so interestingly conceived, was never brought into reality.

The protest of Southerners in 1835 against circulating abolition literature in the South also was a disturbing factor. Kendall, since 1835, postmaster-general, was asked to exclude such matter from the mails on the ground that it was incendiary: he dared

¹Jackson to Van Buren, May 19, 1833, Van Buren Mss; Niles, *Register*, XLIV., 170.

²*Ibid* to *ibid*, May 12, 1833, Van Buren Mss.

not arouse the North by complying. His decision was in the spirit of the Missouri Compromise, which gave each section what it asked within its own limits. He decided that abolition literature might be mailed in the North but need not be delivered in the South. Jackson seems to have taken little interest in the compromise, but it affected him politically. The extreme Southerners, most of them followers of Calhoun, held meetings which could have no other object than to commit the Southern people to resentment. No man in Southern politics dared oppose the meetings; for to urge that the abolitionists be tolerated was political suicide in that section. The bolder of the leaders went so far as to say that Jackson was blamable because he let this menace develop in the nation.¹

Jackson deprecated the alarm of the South and thought that the agitation there was unwise, not only because it imperiled his own policies through party dissension, but also because it threatened disunion. John Randolph, old but undiminished in his opposition to Calhoun, realized how much Jackson meant for the preservation of nationality. "I can compare him to nothing," said the Virginian in his last illness, "but a sticking-plaster. As soon as he leaves the Government all the impurities existing in the country will cause a disruption, but while he sticks the union will last."²

In 1836 the forces of sectionalism were not strong enough to affect the elections. Neither did Clay, Jackson's arch foe, feel strong enough to defeat him. He withheld his hand and trusted those democrats who objected to the elevation of Van Buren to produce enough disorganization to defeat the favorite. The defection showed first in Tennessee, where Van Buren was identified with the friends of Eaton and Lewis. Both these men were unpopular in the state, and Eaton's foes formed

¹Cf. Judge R. E. Parker to Van Buren, August 12, 1835, Van Buren Mss.

²Abram Van Buren to Martin Van Buren, June 3 (or 5), 1833, Van Buren Mss.

an efficient organization when, under Grundy's able leadership, they defeated his hopes of the senate in 1833. Governor Carroll gave the New Yorker fair warning that if he wished the state he should conciliate Grundy.¹

The threatened disruption took shape in December, 1834, when a majority of the Tennessee members of the national house of representatives endorsed Judge White for President. Jackson was so greatly surprised at this evidence of division that he refused at first to believe his old friend would forsake him. Other states followed the lead of Tennessee. White's boom seemed propitiously launched, but it gained no force in the North and Northwest, where it was not desired to see another Tennessee President. Harrison, of Indiana, and Webster got endorsement in their respective sections, and the opponents of Van Buren began to hope they could throw the election into the house. But they could not shake the hold of the strong machine which the Jackson managers had built up. The results showed 170 votes for Van Buren and 124 for all his opponents. It was a party triumph, but with it was a drop of bitterness: Tennessee went for White and with it went Georgia, on which Jackson lavished all his care in the matter of the Cherokees. Harrison's vote was chiefly in the Northwest and Webster's in New England. South Carolina threw her vote away on Mangum, a Southern whig, but the Jackson organization maintained its hold on North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York, all old republican states, who together cast 110 of the 148 electoral votes necessary to a choice.

From the election in November events hurried on to the meeting of congress in December. The last annual message, December 5th, was in a tone of triumph. Of the issues before the country in 1829, all had been settled to Jackson's satisfaction. Internal improvements were relegated to the background, the

¹Wm. Carroll to Van Buren,₂ March 11, 1833, Van Buren Mss.

tariff was compromised and the "American system" was checked, the Bank of the United States was closing up its affairs, nullification was laid low, foreign affairs were on a satisfactory basis and our prestige was heightened, the national debt was discharged and revenues were abundant beyond expectation, the irritating situation in Georgia was pacified, and above all the party organization was established on a splendid popular basis. This totality of achievement was so great that it was hardly discredited by the anxiety that came from the Mexican situation and from the uncertain state of the currency. The panic of the following year was not yet discernible. The message closed with an expression of gratitude "to the great body of my fellow-citizens, in whose partiality and indulgence I have found encouragement and support in many difficult and trying scenes through which it has been my lot to pass during my political career. . . . All that has occurred during my administration is calculated to inspire me with increased confidence in the stability of our institutions."¹

When this message was written he had taken steps for a more formal farewell. The idea was in his mind in 1831, before he decided to stand for reëlection.² He recurred to it in 1836, and October 13th wrote to Taney, now his chief agent in preparing such papers, asking for assistance. The subjects he wished to treat, he said, were the glorious union and the schemes of dissatisfied men to dissolve it, the drift toward monopolies, the attempts to "adulterate the currency" with paper money, the rage for speculation and stock-jobbing, and all other things which tended to corrupt the simple virtue which was left us by the fathers. The danger he foresaw for the spirit of union especially alarmed him. "How to impress the public," he said, "with an adequate aversion to the sectional

¹Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, III., 259.

²Jackson to Van Buren, December 17, 1831, Van Buren Mss.

jealousies, the sectional parties, and sectional preferences which centring on mischievous and intriguing individuals, give them power to disturb and shake our happy confederacy, is a matter which has occupied my own thought greatly." He asked Taney to "throw on paper" his ideas on these subjects. Taney willingly complied and promised to bring the result with him when he came to Washington about New Year's to open the regular term of the supreme court.¹ The *Farewell Address*, issued March 4, 1837, follows closely the copy which is preserved in Taney's handwriting in the Jackson manuscripts.

The whigs declared it presumptuous and self-conceited for this ignorant old man, as they called him, to send out a farewell address in imitation of Washington. The extravagance of their criticism discredited their argument and, as in other cases, brought sympathy to its object. Jackson as the leader of a great party might with propriety assume to give them advice. But his advice in itself was not remarkable. The appeal for union was well conceived, but it was overcast by the other points in the document, points which were after all but the re-stated argument of a thousand democratic stumps in the preceding campaign. But the address pleased the democrats, and many a copy on white satin was laid away as a valuable memento of the time.

Ere the people of Washington read the address they crowded the famous "Avenue" to see its author, pale and trembling from disease, ride up to the place at which he laid down his office. The scene gratified his soul. The oath was administered by Chief Justice Taney, twice rejected by the senate but now in office through an awakening of popular opinion: it was taken by Van Buren, who also had been made to feel the effects of the senate's ire. The plaudits of the great multitude were chiefly for the outgoing President. The polite and unruffled Van Buren

¹Jackson to Taney, October 13th; Taney to Jackson, October 15 and 27, 1836, Jackson Mss.

aroused little enthusiasm; but the frank, convinced, and hard-hitting man at his side had either the love or the hatred of men. For weeks before his exit from office he was overwhelmed by visitors, delegations, and addresses from organizations to express approval of his course and good will for his future. When he left Washington on March 7th, his journey was impeded by the demonstrations of his friends. Eighteen days later he arrived in Nashville.

Writing to his successor he characterized his term of office as follows: "The approbation I have received from the people everywhere on my return home on the close of my official life, has been a source of much gratification to me. I have been met at every point by numerous democratic-republican friends, and many repenting whigs, with a hearty welcome and expressions of 'well done thou faithful servant.' This is truly the patriot's reward, the summit of my gratification, and will be my solace to my grave. When I review the arduous administration through which I have passed, the formidable opposition, to its very close, of the combined talents, wealth and power of the whole aristocracy of the United States, aided as it is, by the monied monopolies of the whole country with their corrupting influence, with which we had to contend, I am truly thankful to my God for this happy result. . . . It displays the virtue and power of the sovereign people, and that all must bow to their will. But it was the voice of this sovereign will that so nobly sustained us against this formidable power and enabled me to pass through my administration so as to meet its approbation." No words of the author could characterize Jackson better than these from his own pen. They give a sincere and faithful explanation of his inner self, and they are unconscious of their own egotism.

¹Jackson to Van Buren, March 30, 1837, Van Buren Mss.

CHAPTER XXXIII

CLOSING YEARS

THE eight years of Jackson's retirement, ending with his death on June 8, 1845, brought him little of the rest he desired. With keen eyes on public affairs he found abundant cause for harassment in the panic of 1837, the long drawn out fight for the sub-treasury, the whig triumph of 1840, the quarrels of Tyler, the obtrusion of the slavery controversy, the question of Texan annexation, the restoration of the New Orleans fine, and the eclipse of Van Buren in 1844. In each of these questions he took the greatest interest, sometimes giving advice that could not be taken, and scolding because it was not followed, but usually contending for a vigorous prosecution of his former policies.

In private affairs he had much anxiety. Bad health, which is particularly distressful to a man of seventy, continued to harass him. Probably it was only his strong will that kept him alive most of these years. His business entanglements had to be cleared by the sale of outlying lands so that to be free of debt he brought his holdings down to the "Hermitage" tract alone, on which with his 150 slaves he must support himself, the family of his son, and the slaves themselves. His house was the object of pilgrimage for many travelers, some of them attached friends and some merely curious strangers. All were received with hearty demonstrations of welcome. Family, slaves, and visitors taxed the resources of the fertile farm to its utmost.

His reception by his neighbors on his return was most cordial. They met him as he neared the "Hermitage," forced him to

alight from his carriage, and read him addresses of welcome. A youth speaking for the children said the descendants of his old soldiers and friends hailed him and would serve under his banner. Children and loyalty ever aroused his deep interest, and hearing this speech he bowed his head on his cane, while tears rained from his eyes and from those of the bystanders.

He fell easily into the old life. Neighbors respected him even if they opposed him politically. His family pleased him greatly: the children of his son appealed to his heart: and old friends were received with the utmost graciousness. For his slaves he ever had the patriarch's care and authority. In 1839, when four of them were arrested on a charge of murder, he thought they were persecuted by his enemies through spite and spent much time and money in acquitting them.¹ His manner of life was now sober as became his age and station. Cock-fighting, tall swearing, and other youthful laxities were forgotten. He retained his love of a good horse, and gave himself earnestly to the welfare of his colts, but not with the enthusiasm of former years.

He was hardly at home before the panic of 1837 was upon the country. The Specie Circular of July, 1836, which drew money from the East to pay for Western lands, and the distribution of the surplus revenue, by which nearly nine millions must be transferred quarterly from locality to locality were undoubtedly two immediate causes. But behind both was a long series of land speculation, Western booming, extravagant expenditures, with general over-confidence and some disastrous crop failures. All the New York banks but three suspended specie payment on May 10th, and the banks elsewhere immediately followed their example. Since by law the government could receive only specie and the notes of specie-paying banks, and since the small amount of specie was largely in hiding, the govern-

¹Jackson to Blair, February 20, 1839, Jackson Mss.

ment, though out of debt through Jackson's rigid policy, had not enough money to transact its business. Much of what it had on hand was locked up in banks which could not withstand the tide of depression. A further embarrassment was due to the fact that government funds could legally be deposited only in banks which paid specie for their notes, and the administration was thus forced to care for its funds, since none of the banks met this requirement. Whigs declared the Specie Circular responsible for the evil of the day and began the old trick of sending committees to Washington to ask the President for relief. So strong was the tide that many democrats began to say that the circular ought to be rescinded at least temporarily. Van Buren withstood the demand, much to the gratification of Jackson, who watched him closely. Business men turned to the expedient of private money. Various public and private corporations issued their tokens of credit; and one of the striking resources was several kinds of copper medals the size of a cent which passed as such generally. They had mottoes of political significance. One with the inscription, "Executive Financiering" depicts a strong box inscribed "sub-treasury" being carried off on the back of a tortoise, while on the reverse is shown a very lively mule with the legend, "I follow in the steps of my illustrious predecessor." Another design is favorable to the democrats; on one side is the ship *Constitution* with the words, "Van Buren, Metallic Currency," and on the other is shown a strong box above which rises Jackson, sword in hand, evidently guarding the treasure. Around the design are the words, "I take the responsibility."

Though Van Buren would not rescind the Specie Circular, he called congress in extra session for the first Monday in September. It seemed a good opportunity to adopt Jackson's cherished policy of a "complete divorce of the Government from all banks," both as to currency and as to the deposit

function. He recommended, therefore, the issue of ten millions of interest-bearing treasury notes, to be receivable with specie for government dues, and he also suggested the creation of a series of sub-treasury offices to hold and pay out public funds without recourse to banks. The first suggestion was enacted into law. It was an emergency measure, but something like it was necessary. The second was incorporated in the first sub-treasury bill, generally known as the "divorce bill," and failed in the house after passing the senate. The democrats controlled the house, but they were not united in their ideas on this subject, and Van Buren was not masterful enough to force them to do his will.

These matters could not but interest Jackson deeply. At the first suggestion of trouble he urged Van Buren to be firm. "You may rest assured," he said, "that nineteen-twentieths of the whole people approve it [the Specie Circular] — all except the speculators and their secret associates and partners."¹ Referring to conditions in Mississippi, where slaves were selling for one third of the former prices, and state bank-notes were 15 per cent. below par, he said that the government would have been in a wretched condition if it had continued to receive for its lands the notes of banks which depended on such conditions. "Let the President," he observed, "take care of the currency or the administration will be shook to the centre." As to the panic, it "will pass away as soon as all the overtraders, gamblers in stock and lands, are broke. Hundreds are yet to fail." And again, "You know I hate the paper system, and believe all banks to be corruptly administered. Their whole object is to make money and like the aristocratic merchants, if money can be made all's well."²

His letters to Van Buren and Blair were read by many of his

¹Jackson to Van Buren, March 22, 1837, Van Buren Mss.

²Jackson to Blair, April 2, 18, 24, June 5, 1837, Jackson Mss.

Washington friends and continually gave advice, insistently, as his nature was, but with such continued expressions of affection that no one could have suspected him of dictation. Some former democrats left the party when the sub-treasury was proposed, and this gave him real pain. When some of the deserters set up a so-called democratic paper called the *Madisonian*, he pronounced it a "Trojan Horse, intended to cut the Republican wall into the citadel, and by dividing yield to the federal shin-plaster party, the entire Republican fortress." When he saw indications that Calhoun was coming back to the party he exclaimed, "Be careful of Catiline!"¹

The year 1838 brought severe illness. There was a swelling in the head, with delirium, after which came sores. For a time his life was despaired of, but with the spring he recovered and "had hope," as he said, "to live to see the Government divorced, a mensa and thora, from all Banks."²

By this time Van Buren had returned to the sub-treasury, urging its establishment and a metallic currency in his regular annual message in December, 1837. The senate took up the matter, passing a sub-treasury bill after a long debate. The democrats were in a majority in the house, but were not united. They would not pass the senate bill and nothing was done on the subject.

When this happened the crisis of the panic was past. By August 13th, most of the banks had resumed specie payment and business was approaching normal conditions. But the arguments of the whigs made a strong impression on the public, and the congressional elections showed democratic reverses. That party did not lose the house, but its majority was reduced to eight with seven seats contested. By seizing these doubtful additions the democrats made themselves safe on party measures,

¹Jackson to Blair, September 27, 1837, Jackson MSS.

²*Ibid* to *ibid*, March 26, 1838, Jackson MSS.

although they laid themselves open to the charge of partisanship. But their forces were united on the sub-treasury. In January, 1840, the senate passed the bill hastily and sent it to the house, where the whigs managed to delay the vote till the end of June, but not to defeat it ultimately. They sought to affect the elections. They predicted that the results in November would favor their cause, and events showed how well they calculated. The sub-treasury, from which the democrats hoped so much, and which eventually proved a serviceable piece of machinery, went into operation on July 4th, which was not long enough before the election to change results.

The long delay in the house was due to the lack of united effort in the democrats. Van Buren was not the man to force a majority to do his will; and Jackson became keenly alive to the weakness of the situation. When he noticed that although the party had a clear majority it took two months to organize the house, he exclaimed: "It has truly sickened me to see the disgraceful proceedings of Congress by the opposition and the want of unity in the Republican party to check and put such disgraceful proceedings to our country down." June 27th, when the struggle was near the end he urged that party discipline be employed and that the bill be forced through. What would one think, he asked, of a general who gave furloughs to his soldiers when the enemy was drawn up before him in line of battle? If members were absent without permission let them be brought back by the sergeant-at-arms; for "it is no time for the Democratic party to use delicacy or usual comity to those who have combined to destroy our Government."¹ But the ultimate triumph of the "divorce bill" gave him much pleasure, although it was soon offset by the chagrin which the whig victory produced. That event surprised him greatly. In October, 1838, he predicted that Clay would

¹Jackson to Blair, February 15 and June 27, 1840, Jackson Mss.

not run as the candidate of his party and that Van Buren would not have opposition, unless the whigs put up Harrison, who "will be scarcely a feather, as Ohio is lost to him."¹

About this time he was asked to get a *nol pros* entered in the indictment of Randolph, who assaulted him in 1833.² He refused to interfere on the ground that he had not indicted Randolph, and he disdained to redress wrong in such a manner. "I have to this old age," he said, "complied with my mother's advice to indict no man for assault and battery or sue him for slander."³ But he added that he hoped Randolph, if convicted, would be pardoned.

The September days brought a visit from Mrs. Blair and her daughter, and about the same time came Kendall to examine the large collection of papers Jackson had preserved for the historian. He was about to begin a life of the hero, a work destined to abandonment before it reached a vital stage in the life of its subject. In the same autumn died Colonel Earl, the painter, whose chief occupation during the last ten years of his life was to paint portraits of Jackson. He was not an industrious worker. Many of his orders came from political admirers of the President, who thought thus doubly to recommend themselves to favor, both through flattering Jackson and through the personal influence of the artist over him. Many of these orders were unfilled when the painter died. He lived with the general for years and was his constant companion, a genial and confiding personage in whom Jackson took great delight. He was shocked by Earl's death and wrote to his other friend, Blair: "I am taught to submit to what Providence chooses, with humble submission. He giveth and he taketh away, and blessed be his name, for he doeth all things well."⁴

¹Jackson to Van Buren, October 22, 1838, Van Buren Mss.

²See above, II., page 715.

³Jackson to Van Buren, December 4, 1838, Van Buren Mss.

⁴Jackson to Blair, October 22, 1838, Jackson Mss.

At times his letters become reminiscent. Thanking Blair for past loyalty, he said: "The aid you gave me in my administration, in the most trying times, will not be soon forgotten by me — not whilst I live. There was no temporizing with either; trusting as we did to the virtue of the people, *the real people*, not the politicians and demagogues, we passed through the most responsible and trying scenes, sustained by the bone and sinew of the nation, *the laborers of the land*, where alone, in these days of Bank rule, and rascocrat¹ corruption, real virtue and love of liberty is to be found. May there be no temporizing by the present, no *hotchpotch* with the Banks, and the same people, will be found nobly supporting the present — esto perpetuum."

There was a gleam of the old fire of self-assertion in 1839. Van Buren, mindful of his chances in the following year, planned a tour throughout the Southwest. He spoke of visiting Jackson, but Polk feared that the opposition in Tennessee would take this as outside dictation. The question was referred to Jackson for decision. He replied with bluntness. The apprehensions, he said, were groundless. He wanted to see Van Buren, the democrats of the state wanted to see him, and he himself would meet the visitor at Memphis and conduct him to Nashville. "My course," he told his friend, "has been always to put my enemies at defiance, and pursue my own course."² Van Buren's projected tour was abandoned, and that ended the doubts which had been raised.

Richard Rush sent from England a letter on duelling by the Earl of Clarendon. Jackson endorsed on it, "The views of the Earle are those of a Christian but unless some mode is adopted to frown down by society the slanderer, who is worse than the murderer, all attempts to put down duelling will be vain. The murderer only takes the life of the parent and leaves his character

¹An allusion to "rag-money."

²1814 to *ibid*, January 29, 1839, Jackson MSS.

³Jackson to Blair, February 20, 1839, Jackson MSS; Jackson to Van Buren, March 4, 1839, Van Buren MSS.

as a goodly heritage to his children, whilst the slanderer takes away his good reputation and leaves him a living monument to his children's disgrace.—A. J.”¹

To Blair he wrote:

I sincerely thank you for the correction of that unwarrantable statement on oath of old Ringgold. There never was more gross falsehoods than he has stated. Governor had my deposition taken. But as it did not suit him and give the negative to all which it appears Ringgold has deposed to, Mr. Butler writes me the Governur would not produce it. What a set of villains we were surrounded with in Washington. Foes exterior with daggers in their hearts. No wonder then that the confiding Barry fell a victim to their treachery and dishonesty. Even Mayo, that the secretary of war and myself kept literally from starving, under the assurance of friendship, purloined my confidential letter, handed it to Adams to do me an injury. This will recoil upon these confederate scamps heads, I hope. Say to my friend Key to spare them not as the receiver of stolen goods is as bad as the thief.²

Mayo, it should be said, was suing Blair for saying in the *Globe* that the letter alluded to was stolen, and Francis Scott Key, with whom Jackson had friendly relations while President, was Blair's counsel. Gouverneur was Monroe's son-in-law.

The campaign of 1840 opened gloomily for Van Buren. The confused state of the finances, the growing power of the abolitionists in close Northern states, and the general desire to repudiate a man who had no real strength aside from that of his predecessor all contributed to his weakness. He was a relentless politician and in his rise to power had pushed aside so many of that class that he had no deep hold on them. Unlike Jackson, he had none of that boldness which charms the people. And yet he was the embodiment of the Jacksonian

¹Rush to Jackson, August 12, 1837, Jackson Mss.

²Jackson to Blair, June 5, 1839, Jackson Mss.

policies, which the whigs were trying to reverse, and he must be kept at the head of his party.

His opponents were in several groups, some of them Clay whigs and some of them democrats who would not accept Clay's leadership. These groups disliked one another too much to march under the banner of Clay, the old line whig, and it was seen that Van Buren could be defeated only under the leadership of a man against whom there were not so many inveterate enemies. It thus happened that the whig convention nominated Harrison, of Ohio, with Tyler for vice-president, a state-rights Virginian who repudiated Jackson partly on the doctrine of anti-nullification and partly because he felt that the President assumed too much power in ordering the removal of the deposits. The democrats esteemed Harrison slightly and made the mistake of saying so in terms of undisguised contempt. He was a prosperous farmer of simple taste and the opposing papers exaggerating his poverty made him a man of no account. A disappointed Clay supporter was heard to say that if the candidate were given a pension of \$2,000 a year, plenty of hard cider, a log cabin, and a coon, he would give up all pretension to the presidency. A democratic correspondent sent this gleefully to a democratic paper: other papers of the same party took it up, enlarging on the idea. One of them represented the ladies of the District of Columbia as raising money "to supply the 'war-worn hero' with a suit of clothes. If you have any old shoes, old boots, old hats, or old stockings, send them on and they will be forwarded to the 'Hero of North Bend.'"¹ The whigs accepted the issue on this basis and the famous hard-cider campaign was the result. It became so potent that in 1841 Polk was defeated for governor of Tennessee by a man of no ability whose chief performance on the stump was to arise with the most comical manner, draw from

¹Quoted by McMaster, *History of the United States*, VI., 386, Harrison lived at North Bend, O.

his pocket a whig coonskin, gently stroke it with his hand, and say, "Did you ever see such fine fur?"¹ The democrats had shown how to appeal to the masses in one way, but their opponents now found a more successful way in seeking to arouse popular enthusiasm for a plain farmer candidate. Their success disgusted Jackson, who spoke with contempt of "the Logg Cabin, hard cider, and Coon humbuggery."

Although the democrats had no trouble to select their candidate for President, they had the greatest embarrassment in regard to the candidate for vice-president. R. M. Johnson, the incumbent, who in 1837 was only carried by a vote in the senate, desired reelection. Jackson and his particular following desired Polk for the place. So strong a contest appeared likely that the nominating convention decided to name no one, trusting the issue again to the senate, where the party was safe. Jackson heard of the plan before it was adopted and opposed it in several letters as strongly as he could. It subjected the party, he said with entire honesty and good sense, to the same criticism that it used so effectively against its opponents in 1836 — that as neither candidate could be elected nobody need vote for them.²

During the campaign Calhoun and Van Buren drew closer together, and it was then that Jackson sent the latter the letter, already quoted³ in which he acquitted him of stimulating the quarrel of 1830. It was written more to serve Van Buren than to relieve Calhoun. The latter was coming into his own. The passing of Jackson and of his protégé removed the barrier by which the South Carolinian was shut out of the democratic party. Tyler's administration, the Texas question, and the growth of sectionalism in the South gave him the chance to dis-

¹Garrett and Goodpasture, *History of Tennessee*, 190.

²Jackson to Blair, February 15 and April 3, 1840, Jackson MSS.

³Jackson to Van Buren, July 31, 1840, Van Buren MSS. See above, II., 514

solve his alliance with Clay and become again a leader of the democrats.

To the old man at the "Hermitage," racked by disease and disappointed in many ways, the opening events of the new administration seemed ominous. He expected the whigs would pass a bank bill and urged that the democrats give notice as soon as it passed that they would fight for its repeal. He characterized Clay, without apparent occasion, as "always a swaggering, unprincipled demagogue, boldly stepping into difficulties, but meanly sneaking out."¹ He expressed his opinion of Harrison's military ability in the exclamation, "May the Lord have mercy upon us, if we have a war during his Presidency." General Scott he called "a pompous nullity."

The death of Harrison gave him pleasure, which he did not attempt to disguise from his friend Blair. "I anticipated this result," he said, "from the causes you have named. He had not sufficient energy to drive from him the office hunters, and he was obliged to take stimulants to keep up the system. This with fatigue brought on the complaint which carried him hence. A kind and overruling providence has interfered to prolong our glorious union and happy republican system which Genl. Harrison and his cabinet was preparing to destroy under the direction of the profligate demagogue Henry Clay. . . . The Lord ruleth, let the people rejoice."² He did not believe Tyler would surrender himself to Clay.

The following observation, also, is interesting, coming from Jackson: "The Genl. [Harrison] had not sufficient energy to say to his heads of departments you shall not dismiss officers without my approbation, not remove any without a fair hearing. . . . Had he removed the first member of his cabinet, as I should have done, who attempted it without his orders, he

¹Jackson to Van Buren, March 31, 1841, Van Buren Mss.

²Jackson to Blair, April 19, 1841, Jackson Mss.

would have been spared by providence.”¹ Some allowance must be made for the irritation of a man old and ill, but that done, he still remains in such utterances as this — and his letters at this stage are full of them — a capricious man, whose anger overrides his sense of justice as well as his intellectual consistency.

When Tyler quarreled with Clay in the summer of 1841 he drew near to the democrats, who received him gladly. Jackson thought to facilitate the approach by a letter congratulating the President on his position in relation to a bank. The Virginian replied unctuously. He was pleased, he said, “that the plaudits of the multitude have received the endorsement of the sage in his closet.”²

But the purposes of Jackson and Tyler were widely apart. Signs of the times indicated that the enthusiasm of 1840 was passing, and the democrats began to have hopes for 1844. Jackson intended that Van Buren should have the nomination for vindication and as the logical candidate. Tyler hoped that he would be able to appear as the regular democratic candidate. It was preposterous that he who defeated the democrats in 1840 should aspire to lead them four years later, but Tyler was capable of illogical plans. Some democrats encouraged his hopes, but Jackson put his veto on them. He was willing, he said, to receive Tyler as a penitent, but not to make him head of the democratic church until he did penance for the sins of 1840.³ He was then most earnest for Van Buren and said that if that gentleman were elected he would go to Washington in his old “Constitution” carriage and himself escort his friend to the capitol to take the oath of office.⁴

But Calhoun had also to be dealt with. He had no love for

¹Jackson to S. J. Hays, May 4, 1841, Transcripts in Library of Congress.

²Tyler to Jackson, September 20, 1842, Jackson Mss.

³Jackson to Blair, August 18, 1843, Jackson Mss.

⁴Jackson to Blair, November 25, 1842, Jackson Mss.

Van Buren, although he was now a loyal party man. He led a convinced Southern group who talked of nominating him for President when the democratic convention met in Baltimore in May, 1844. They probably knew this could not be done, but they were in a position to make trouble for other candidates, and they insisted that the interests of the South be respected. That they might accomplish their purposes the better they urged the annexation of Texas with great vigor. It was the kind of question to develop their strength in the South, and they cared little about the effects elsewhere. It was an ominous affair for any candidate who relied on support in both sections of the country.

Jackson was now warmly in favor of annexation. He seems to have forgotten that there was as much likelihood that bringing up the question now would damage Van Buren's chances as in 1836. Perhaps the difference lay in the fact that in 1836 he was better advised. He let his opinion be known; and the enemies of his favorite took advantage of it. They began to urge annexation, and Aaron V. Brown, a Tennessee congressman, wrote him early in 1843 to know his views on the matter. His reply was full and positive. Texas was ours, he said, by the Louisiana purchase; and although he consented to the Florida purchase in 1819 as the best that could be done under the circumstances, he now censured Monroe's government for throwing away an opportunity to increase the national domain, and he attributed that action to Northern jealousy of the rising power of the South and West. Jackson said his change of opinion came when, after he was President, he discovered from Erving's correspondence that Spain would have given up Texas in 1819. He caused to be made a series of extracts to that purport, and they survive among his papers. John Quincy Adams with accustomed vigor attacked him in a speech, and Jackson burst forth in an unbecomingly angry reply in the form of a letter to Gen.

Robert Armstrong.¹ Perhaps the public took little interest in this renewal of an old conflict.

It was a day when prominent politicians were not above playing tricks on one another, and Van Buren's opponents concealed the letter to Brown nearly a year, and in March, 1844, gave it to the public with the date changed to 1844. They had recently seen some cautious utterances of the New Yorker against immediate annexation, and they thus hoped to show that Jackson and his protégé were at variance on the important question. When the Van Burenites saw the situation they hurried one of their number to the "Hermitage" to lay the whole case before its master; and in due time came a second letter from Jackson on annexation. He repeated all his former arguments, but added a strong endorsement of Van Buren, who, it was said, could be trusted to do what ought to be done in the situation.

It is doubtful on which side the advantage now lay, had not the affair been given a decided turn by two letters, one from Clay and the other from Van Buren. The Kentuckian wrote April 17, 1844, a letter from Raleigh, N. C., in which he said: "I consider the annexation of Texas at the present time as a measure compromising the national character, involving us certainly in a war with Mexico, probably with other foreign powers, dangerous to the integrity of the Union, inexpedient in the present financial condition of the country, and not called for by any general expression of public opinion." This letter pleased the North, but that advantage was later undone by a second letter in which he tried to please his Southern followers.

A little earlier than this W. H. Hammett, an unpledged Mississippi delegate to the democratic nominating convention, asked Van Buren's views on the same question. The New

¹Parton, *Life of Jackson*, III., 662.

Yorker was suspicious of the request, and got Silas Wright to talk with the questioner. Hammett protested good faith and said he was informed that Van Buren was for annexation. He was assured he should have an answer, and Van Buren, somewhat unwillingly, as it seems, wrote a very good letter, in which he gave reasons why Texas should not be annexed at present. He urged our neutral obligations, and evils coming from a lust for power, and said that if there came a real probability that Texas would fall into English hands the American people would rise unanimously against it. He also said that if the question should be forced on him as President he would follow the will of the American people as expressed in congress. The fact that these two letters, so similar in sentiment, came so nearly at the same time has given rise to the suspicion that there was an agreement between the writers that if it were necessary to speak they would speak as they did. Van Buren's letter was sent to Wright, who gave it to Hammett in Washington. Both men, with some others true to the leader, considered it a fine stroke and had it printed at once.¹

The country at large was of a decidedly contrary opinion. Jackson gives us a graphic picture of how the news came to Nashville, and it may serve for an illustration of the effect in other Southern communities. May 4th, the democrats in the town called a meeting to endorse annexation. The place was full of people of both parties; for neither whigs nor democrats dared openly oppose this policy. Early in the day came a mail with papers containing Clay's letter. It was received with chagrin by his friends and with joy by his opponents. Later in the day came another mail, and Van Buren's letter was in it. Gloom now settled on the faces of the democrats. The meeting dissolved with little demonstration on either side.

¹Wright to Van Buren, April 11 and 29, 1844, Van Buren Mss. The letters are summarized by McMaster, *History of the United States*. VII., 328-330.

Jackson was so deeply grieved that he became ill. "I would to God I had been at Mr. V. B. elbow when he closed his letter," he wrote to Blair. "I would have brought to his view *the proper conclusion*. We are all in sackcloth and ashes." By the proper conclusion he meant that although the writer's views were as stated, yet in a case of supreme necessity he would favor annexation. Jackson became convinced that Benton induced Van Buren to write the letter, but he gave no reason for the opinion.¹ A few days showed the seriousness of the situation. Advices from the states south of Tennessee began to come suggesting Polk for the candidate and inquiring for a good Northern man to run with him. "My heart bleeds to hear them, but the die is cast I fear," said Jackson; and he closed a fourth long letter to Blair on this subject in saying: "I write you now, fearful that my complaint, if not checked, may soon deprive me of the strength. I hope for the best, but with calm resignation say 'The Lord's will be done.'"² Thus it happened that Van Buren's promising hopes came to an end and the Baltimore convention named Polk for its candidate.

There was much intrigue behind the defeat of Van Buren, and he himself attributed his misfortune to that fact. "If I could think with him" [Jackson], he wrote to Blair, "that my Texas letter controlled the proceedings at Baltimore, I would have a much better opinion of the actors in them. But this I could abundantly show was not the case, if the play were worth the candle. How much like the old man it is to be so entirely engrossed with a single idea, and that always a pregnant one. But whilst he is fighting the British and Mexicans, we will fight the Whigs."³

In the meantime Texan annexation came before the senate. Tyler favored this policy as much as Calhoun, and he lent himself

¹Jackson to Polk, June 27, 1844, Polk Papers, Library of Congress.

²Jackson to Blair, May 7, 11 (2 letters), and 18, 1844, Jackson MSS.

³Van Buren to Blair, October 5, 1844; MSS., Library of Congress.

to the plans of the Southerners. A small party of abolitionists in Texas in communication with brethren of the same opinion in England formed a plan by which the British government was to be asked to pay for the slaves then in that state on condition that Texas should declare for emancipation. Such a move would give England a strong hold on the country, and it was believed would lead to British occupation. Tyler was informed of the project, and although the British ministry disclaimed any purpose to support the plan, he would not believe that it was no menace to American hopes.

The Texans desired American annexation, but they were not willing to seem to press it. Van Zandt, their agent in Washington, in the winter of 1843-1844 suggested that Texas would ask for annexation if assured that two thirds of the senate would favor a treaty for that purpose. He proposed, also, that Jackson write to President Houston, of Texas, making the offer. Judge Catron, of the supreme court, a Tennessean, inquired and satisfied himself that the senate was favorable, reported the fact to Jackson, who wrote at once to Houston. A week later Catron became convinced he was mistaken and so informed Jackson, who declined to communicate that information to Houston, saying that the treaty ought to be offered any way and that if this was done American opinion would demand that the rich province be secured. Jackson added that he would close his eyes in peace if Texas were ours.¹

Jackson got Houston's reply by the hand of W. D. Miller, Houston's private secretary, authorized to talk to the venerable ex-President with the utmost freedom. The result was a letter to a prominent man in Washington, probably Catron, in which Jackson said: "The present golden moment to obtain Texas must not be lost, or Texas must, from necessity, be thrown into

¹Catron to Jackson, March 9, 1845. Catron puts the date 1833 or 1834, but he evidently meant to say 1843 or 1844. For this phase of the Texas question, see *Executive Documents*, 28th congress, 1st session, volume VI., No. 271. The Jackson letter is at page 109.

the arms of England, and be forever lost to the United States." He based his opinion on the assurance of Houston that Texas having offered annexation three times would, if now rejected, never agree to it again.

Houston did what was expected, writing Jackson a long letter in which he urged reasons for securing Texas at once. Tyler, acting through his secretaries of state, Upshur and later Calhoun, pushed on the preparation of a treaty, and presented it to the senate April 22, 1844. By this time the extreme Southerners were vigorously demanding its approval, and the abolitionists in the North as vigorously urging its rejection. It cannot be doubted that each side looked chiefly at the bearing of the matter on the slavery question. So strong was the protest against it that the moderate men in each party were opposed to the treaty, and it was rejected by a vote of thirty-five to sixteen. But neither Tyler nor his followers thought that the matter was settled.

Jackson's letters at this time were full of annexation. One of them was to the President, who replied to it on April 14th, with the assurance that the treaty of annexation was about to go to the senate. What that body would do he would not say, but the question was so powerful that it must sooner or later break down opposition. Tyler added: "For the part, my dear sir, that you have taken in this great matter, you have only added another claim to the gratitude of the country. God grant that you may live many years to enjoy the gratitude incident to the reflections on a well-spent life."¹

Benton's attitude toward annexation is interesting. January 16th, when it was newly urged, he wrote to Jackson in haste and confidence, supporting it warmly. "I think the annexation of Texas depends *on you*," he said; and he wanted Jackson to get Houston to authorize the submission of a treaty. "It is now

¹Tyler to Jackson, April 14. 1844, Jackson MSS.

more than twenty years," he continued, "since I had the honor to present your name, for the presidency, to the *first* Democratic meeting in the union, and I have supported you from that day to this, and as I grow older, I feel every day, increased and increasing confidence, in the wisdom of the great measures of your administration."¹

But Benton soon realized the hand of Calhoun, for whom he ever had distrust; and he refused to vote for the treaty when it appeared. He placed his opposition on the ground that it meant war with Mexico, and he made a three days' speech to that effect. He pronounced the treaty, with its wide boundaries for Texas, an outrage on a neutral power and a selfish scheme to advance the presidential aspirations of Calhoun, the secretary of state, under whose supervision it was prepared. Writing to Jackson a few days later he said that his speech would show all his objections to the treaty but one, and that it concealed a plan for "the dissolution of the union and the formation of a Southern confederacy to include California. We are in a bad way here [in Washington] about as we were in 1824-25. . . . Since the meeting of Congress a nest of members of Congress have been at work to nullify the will of the people in the person of Mr. Van Buren, and now they [are] at work to nullify the convention, and break it up without a nomination, or with the nomination of some one whom the people have rejected. Offices, one hundred millions of Texas lands, ten millions of Texas stock, are making fearful havoc among our public men."²

Benton's outspoken words led to a bitter encounter in the senate with McDuffie, who spoke for Calhoun; and the papers told how after it was over the old Jacksonian encountered John Quincy Adams, holding out his hand and saying: "We are

¹Benton to Jackson, January 10, 1844, Jackson MSS.

²Benton to Jackson, May 28, 1844, Jackson MSS. See also Meigs, *Life of Benton* 344-349

both old men, we must now unite and save the Constitution." When Jackson saw these words in the newspapers he wrote: "Do my dear Mr. Blair inform me if this can be true. If it is I want no better proof of his derangement, and it politically prostrates him."

When Benton made the charge that politicians held Texas land, he could not have known that Jackson himself held such property. A. J. Donelson, now Minister to Mexico, writing to his old patron, said, December 24, 1844, that W. D. Miller, Houston's private secretary, was looking after Jackson's land claims in Texas and that they were located about eighty miles from the town of Washington, in that state. Miller made a visit to the "Hermitage" early in 1844.¹ Whether Jackson acquired these claims by purchase or by gift does not appear; but he could not have had them before this question came up, since there are in his letters several references to his property, and nothing is said there about possessions in Texas before 1844.²

Tyler's attitude toward the whig program brought Jackson to think well of him, and his position on annexation made the two men friends. As the campaign of 1844 progressed it became of increasing importance that the Virginian should give up his pretensions to the Presidency; and at Polk's request Jackson undertook to persuade him to that step. He gave such a request through Major Lewis, and Tyler acceded to it in a letter to Jackson. He made no conditions, but suggested that his followers be received by the democrats with consideration. He was particularly anxious that Blair and Benton be induced to cease denouncing him and his supporters.³ He continued to show his favor to Jackson, who was now of great importance to the cause of annexation. In the autumn he

¹Jackson to Blair, June 24, 1844, Jackson MSS.

²A. J. Donelson to Jackson, December 24, 1844, Jackson MSS.

³Tyler to Jackson, August 18th, September 17th, Polk to Jackson, July 23, 1844, Jackson MSS.

appointed A. J. Donelson, Jackson's former private secretary, minister to Mexico. He was bent on securing Texas in the coming session of congress. Every effort was made to keep the Texans in a frame of mind favorable to annexation, a task probably not so difficult as appeared, and when congress early in 1845 passed the joint resolution for that purpose, he signed it on March 1st, with much pleasure. Jackson also considered it a great achievement; Polk was pleased that a vexatious affair was not left over for his administration. It was the last matter of public interest with which Jackson was prominently connected.

In their private relations the years of Jackson's retirement were not happy. A few of his friends still loved him, among them Blair, Van Buren, and Lewis. But many others forgot him as soon as he ceased to be the commander of a political army, with the power to make himself obeyed and the ability to give rewards. As man after man turned against Van Buren, he took the desertions as personal injuries to himself.

His relation with Major Lewis, which was clouded by the latter's attitude toward the bank controversy, was strained for some time after March 4, 1837. Van Buren did not remove Lewis from his auditorship, but left him without influence. Jackson advised his friend to return to his estate in Tennessee, but the suggestion was not followed. Lewis did not gain in favor with the new administration, and finally, in 1839, Jackson hinted that he had better resign before he was forced out in obedience to the principle of rotation in office. This brought a long protest from the neglected auditor. He admitted that he was out of favor, but it was due to his enemies who poisoned the minds of those who should be grateful. Shortly after Van Buren's inauguration he called on the President and tried to converse with him in the "frank and unreserved manner we had been in the habit of doing before our intercourse had been embarrassed and clouded with distrust." But Van Buren's

cold manner satisfied the caller that his alienation was complete. Lewis thought this ingratitude; for no one had stood by the New Yorker when he needed a friend more steadily than he. Let Jackson say if Van Buren had followed "the precept of our divine Saviour, which teaches us to do unto others as we would they should do unto us. The coldest heart would scarcely be incompetent to appreciate my feelings when I first discovered the petrifying change in the deportment toward me, on the part of one for whom I had labored night and day, and on account of whom I had drawn on my devoted head the opposition's fiercest lightning."¹ We can feel for Lewis. He was a tool, but a faithful one. He had served Van Buren well in 1832 and earlier. But his day was past and he was cast aside. In his letter he used some sharp reproaches for Jackson, whom also he thought ungrateful; but these brought a reply equally outspoken.² The upshot of this stage of the matter was rather to clear the atmosphere; and after that the two men returned to something of their old intimacy. They exchanged letters at regular intervals as long as Jackson lived.

The years of retirement brought financial embarrassment, the announcement of which gave grim joy to his enemies. It was fit, they said, that he should suffer in the catyclasm he himself brought on others. But his troubles were not due to himself. Unwise management by his son, Andrew, Jr., brought an accumulation of debt. Jackson said most characteristically that it came from the machinations of his enemies,³ but he determined to pay the indebtedness, although to do so would leave him shorn of all his property except the "Hermitage" tract. He sought to borrow in various places, but there was little money to be had in the West, and from recent experi-

¹Lewis to Jackson, August 30th; Jackson to Lewis, August 13, 1839, Mss. in New York Public Library.

²Jackson to Lewis, September 9, October 19, 1839, Mss. in New York Public Library. Many other letters which passed between the two men are in the same collection.

³Jackson to Kendall, May, 23, 1842, *Cincinnati Commercial*, February 5, 1879.

ences the Eastern capitalists would not lend in that section. He secured \$6,000 from his old friend, Plauché, of New Orleans, but \$10,000 more was needed. One day Blair heard Lewis say that the general needed to borrow. He wrote at once to offer \$10,000 to be forwarded as soon as the appropriation bill passed. He perhaps saw the fitness of lending to his old patron some of the profits on the fat printing contracts which he got through that patron's favor. The loan was arranged at 6 per cent. interest, although Jackson offered 7 per cent.; and it was to be repaid in three annual instalments. Blair's partner, Rives, insisted on sharing the honor of making the loan. They generously made the accommodation as much like a gift as possible, and extended it when the first payment was not met. It was still unpaid in 1855. In his gratitude to Blair, Jackson sent him a filly out of one of his blooded mares, calling her "Miss Emuckfau," after one of his battles against the Creeks.¹

March 10, 1842, Senator Linn, of Missouri, introduced a bill to remit the fine of \$1,000 laid on Jackson for contempt of Judge Hall in New Orleans, in 1815. It aroused bitter opposition from the whigs. They made it a point of civil polity to refuse, and Jackson made it a point of personal honor to insist as a means of vindication. The discussion was prolonged for two years, Linn dying in the interval. It was ably continued under the leadership of C. J. Ingersoll, who ten years earlier was a leading lawyer for Biddle in the bank controversy. Stephen A. Douglas, then a young member of the house, made a speech in favor of the bill.² At last the fine was remitted by a law approved on February 16, 1844. The fine with interest amounted to \$2,732; and Jackson sent \$620 of it to Blair, \$600 to pay interest on the loan and \$20, and he playfully said, for the

¹Blair to Jackson, January 18, Jackson MSS. Jackson to Lewis, February 28, March 30, 31, April 2, 23, June 2, 1842, MSS. in New York Public Library.

²Johnson, *Life of Douglas*, 69-72.

"outfit of Miss Emuckfau," who was with foal by Priam. The debate on the fine gave him great concern. "My dear Blair," he wrote while it progressed, "I can say to you confidently, unless relieved from some of my afflictions under which I now labor I cannot remain long here. If providence will spare me to hear of your election [as printer to congress], and to see the result of the vote in congress on the subject of the fine imposed by Judge Hall I will be thankful. I hope my friends will press it to a final vote."¹

During the period of retirement Jackson was an object of veneration to many people. Admirers named their children for him, asked for his autograph, and so many wrote to request a lock of his hair that he adopted the custom of keeping the clippings when he had it cut. A South Carolinian writing for a lock proposed to put it in a thousand-dollar locket and pass it down to his son as a valuable heirloom. A Philadelphia gentleman wrote from his Walnut Street residence in a similar strain, and thanked God as well as Jackson that he owned so great a treasure. John Y. Mason, secretary of the navy, was another who expressed gratitude for a lock of the general's hair.

The approach of Polk's inauguration revived the old 'man's interest in politics. Judge Catron said that Jackson was responsible for the election because it was he who secured the withdrawal of Tyler.² In securing that action, he undoubtedly brought the two wings of the party together, pledging Polk to reasonableness and securing through Tyler the coöperation of the extreme Southerners. The latter now desired Calhoun for the cabinet, but Jackson urged that it should not be granted them. "You could not get on with him," he said. "England is the place for him, there to combat with my Lord Aberdeen,

¹November 22, 1843, Jackson MSS.

²Catron to Jackson, November 13, 1844, Jackson MSS.



ANDREW JACKSON IN 1845. AGE 78

From a daguerreotype by Dan. Adams, of Nashville. Taken a few weeks before Jackson died.
In the background are seen the pillows on which was propped the invalid's
body when the picture was made

the abolition question." He also suggested that Silas Wright be not offered a cabinet position for the present.¹

Office-seekers sought his intercession with the President-elect, among them Kendall, in financial straits. He wanted the Spanish mission, then filled by Irving. He wrote Jackson for his influence, saying it would be necessary to remove G. W. Irvine [*sic*]. Jackson was complaisant and wrote Polk as desired. "There can be no delicacy in recalling Erwin," he said, "he is only fit to write a book and scarcely that, and he has become a good Whig."² G. W. Erving was minister to Spain when Jackson invaded Florida in 1818; and it seems that the general was not quite clear in his mind as to the difference between the two men.

The state of affairs in regard to Oregon aroused his keenest anticipations. When he knew of England's demands, all his spirit rose in protest. May 2nd, five weeks before he died, he wrote to urge Polk to be firm, saying: "This bold avowal by Peele and Russel of perfect claim to Oregon, must be met as boldly, by a denial of their right, and confidence in our own — that we view it too plain a case of right on our side to hesitate a moment upon the subject of extending our laws over it, and populating it with our people. Permit me to remind you that during the canvass I gave a thousand pledges for your courage and firmness, both in *war* and in *peace*, to carry on the administration of our government. This subject is intended to try your energy. Dash from your lips the councils of the timid on this question, should there be any in your council. No temporizing with Britain on this subject now — temporizing will not do."³

Some of his enemies said that Jackson's mind weakened in

¹Jackson to Polk, December 16, 1844, *Polk Papers*, Library of Congress.

²Jackson to Polk, December 13, 1844; Kendall to Jackson, December 2, 1844; *Polk Papers*, Library of Congress.

³Jackson to Polk, May 2, 1845, *Polk Papers*, Library of Congress.

old age. His letters on ordinary topics show that he lost something of the power of sustained energy, but on each matter which interested him the outcome of his mental activity was clear and positive; and the words just quoted show that on a subject which appealed deeply he thought as vigorously as in his palmiest days. His ringing call to Polk has, in fact, all the Napoleonic fire of his early military proclamations.

In Jackson's old age he fulfilled the promise he had long since made to his wife to join the Presbyterian church. This he did early in the year 1839 at the end of a series of revival services and with the usual manifestations of conversion. For thirty-five years before he became President, he said, he was accustomed to read at least three chapters of the Bible daily.¹ Such a man could not have been at any time indifferent to religion as an intellectual fact, however little it may have affected his outward conduct. While President he attended the Presbyterian church regularly. Mrs. Calhoun, mother-in-law of the distinguished South Carolinian, once said that if Jackson were elected President in 1824, she would spend the following winter in Washington, in order to see a President who would go to church. Of her, it was once said that she and Jackson were "the only independent characters" in Washington.² In the passages in this book quoted from his letters are abundant evidences of a pious attitude in bearing sorrow and of dependence on God in times of great danger. These feelings increased with old age and with the approach of death: they do not seem to have been more frequent after the date of his conversion. Nor is there any noticeable decrease after that date in the angry epithets he hurled at his opponents. Clay and Adams to the day of his death were unforgiven, and some of his last utterances were to pronounce them falsifiers. Religion was only one of his emotions.

¹Parton, *Life of Jackson*, III., 633. See also, B. F. Butler to Jackson, March 16, 1839, Jackson MSS.

²Rev. E. S. Ely to Jackson, January 28, 1829, Jackson MSS.

Next to his devotion to his wife Jackson's best friendship was with Blair. From the beginning of his retirement to the end of his life he wrote regularly to his friend in Washington. Hardly a week passed without a letter. In 1842 both Blair and Lewis visited the "Hermitage," and Van Buren came also on his tour in the South. The visits brought cheerfulness for a time; but the progress of disease prevented real happiness. Eyes failed, dizziness and weakness became more notable, and at last in the winter of 1844-45 came dropsical symptoms. To the doctors it indicated a failure of functions which precedes the end. They knew not how to control them, and the dropsy developed throughout the spring.

The letters to Blair witness in many ways the advance of the disease. The patient, who knew the significance of his symptoms, reported faithfully all that bore on them. His handwriting, bold and large in ordinary times, now shows his advancing weakness. The characters never lose their size, but they get a greater slant, the loops run down and up to a point, and the lines are made with a fine waver which leaves its zigzag throughout their entire course. But for all that, every detail to the crossing of t's and dotting of i's is complete, except that now and then a word is inadvertently omitted.

The last letter of the series is dated May 26th, two weeks before he died. It contains some information for C. J. Ingersoll, in regard to the invasion of Florida, and after that comes to his health. Describing it he says: "This is my situation, and in what it may result God only knows. I am resting patiently under the visitations of providence, calmly resigned to his will. It would be a miracle should I be restored to health under all these afflictions. The Lord's will be done."

June 8, 1845, he died peacefully and two days later was buried by the side of his wife in the "Hermitage" garden. The long illness had attracted the attention of the whole country, and

many friends came to say farewell. By his own wish the funeral was as simple as possible. An Oriental sarcophagus popularly said to have once contained the bones of Alexander Severus, the Roman emperor, was offered him in March, 1845, for his own body. He refused it, saying: "My republican feelings and principles forbid it, the simplicity of our system of government forbids it." Memorial services were held by his friends in many cities. Some bitter partisans would not attend them, even as he himself would not attend a similar meeting in honor of John Marshall. But with the majority of the people his death was a genuine sorrow. To them he was a real hero — a personification of a great cause, and the passing of his influence was a national loss.

Time has softened some of the asperities of the epoch in which he lived. The American who now knows how to estimate the life of the Jacksonian era will take something from the pretensions of his enemies and add something to the virtues hitherto accorded his partisans. Jackson's lack of education, his crude judgments in many affairs, his occasional outbreaks of passion, his habitual hatred of those enemies with whom he had not made friends for party purposes, and his crude ideas of some political policies — all lose some of their infelicity in the face of his brave, frank, masterly leadership of the democratic movement which then established itself in our life. This was his task: he was adapted to it; he did it faithfully, conscientiously, ably. Few American Presidents have better lived up to the demands of the movement which brought them into power.

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